

A  
PRESENT  
FOR  
Teeming VVomen.

O R,

Scripture-DireCTIONS for Women  
with child, how to prepare for  
the houre of TRAVEL.

Written first for the private use of a Gentlewoman of quality in the West, and now published for the common good.

By John Oliver, *less then the least*  
of all Saints.



Gen. 3. 13. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, the Serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

Ver. 16. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.

1 Tim. 2. 14, 15. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was first in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in the faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.

LONDON, Printed by Sarah Griffin, for Mary Rothwell,  
at the Fountain and Bear in Cheshide.

1663.

И

ВТОРОЕ

Содержание

1. Введение

2. Глава I

3. Глава II

4. Глава III

5. Глава IV

6. Глава V

7. Глава VI

8. Глава VII

9. Глава VIII

10. Глава IX

11. Глава X

12. Глава XI

13. Глава XII

14. Глава XIII

15. Глава XIV





T O

The ever Honoured,  
My truly noble and vertuous Friend,  
The Ornament of her Countrey,  
and Glory of her Family,

Mrs. BRIDGET SEYMOUR,  
of *Hanford-house*, in the Coun-  
ty of DORSET.



*Crave your pardon, for so  
long detaining that which  
you have so desirously ex-  
pected. And now, that I  
do expose it to publick view, when I  
cast about in my thoughts, to whom  
to dedicate it, I could not but retain  
a grateful memory, of the many  
noble favours, whereby your*

# The Epistle

(a) Mrs. *worthy relations, viz. your* (a) Mo-  
*An Philips* ther and your (b) Aunt did ever  
*of Montagu* oblige me. Neither must I be so  
*cute.*  
 (b) Mrs. *irreligious, as not to have a more*  
*Ma. Speake* then ordinary respect, for that (c)  
*of Whit-* true piety and goodness wherein they  
*lackinton,* excel. But when I remember, that  
*both in* you have so fairly written after their  
*Somerset-* copy, (d) that the vertues of both  
*shire.*  
 (c) Prov. *are visible in you; so that any thing*  
 31. 30. redounding to your just praise, will  
 Phil. 1. 3, tend also to their honour; and seeing  
 4, 5, 6, 7. your first pregnancy gave me this  
 c 4. 14. 16. occasion of presenting you with my  
 1 Thel. 1. thoughts on this subject in a short  
 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. scheme, which I have now thus en-  
 2 Thel. 1. larged; and you were pleased (as  
 3, 4. your courteous manner ever was) to  
 Philem. 4. accept it with that thankfulness, as  
 5, 6, 7. if it had been some greater matter,  
 Rev. 2. 2, and as if it had been of some use to  
 3, 9, 19, you  
 &c. Acts  
 9. 36.  
 (d) 2 Joh.  
 1. 4. 3 Joh.  
 3, 4, 5, 6.

## Dedicatory.

*you in that condition. Therefore I humbly crave leave of those my obliging friends, to dedicate this piece to you onely. And had I no other errand to appear in print, this were enough; to tell the world for their imitation, that he must travel far, and seek long among our Nobility and Gentry, that shall finde any of more ingenuity, of more devotion to God, more obedience and reverence to Parent, more courtesie and realty in affable conversation, more prudence and modesty in your speeches, and deportment, more respect to pious Ministers, more happy in your memory to retain what you heard, more pious in your retention to commit it to writing next day for your private use, then you were in your single estate, and the flower of*

## The Epistle

your age; a season wherein others of your quality doe minde some lesser things in jest, but nothing in earnest. *This made you amiable in the eyes of all that knew you, but especially to him, who is now your yolk-fellow, a Gentleman of whose worth many say so much, that I need say nothing. And indeed in the judgement of all that know you, what can be said more for the proof of his wisdome, (a) then his making such a choice? Yet, I doubt not, but his (b) tenderesse and faithfulnessse to you, and his most happy immunity from the gentile vices of this degenerate age, will give you reall cause of continuall thankfulnessse, to that good providence, which first wedded your hearts together. But that which addes to*  
your

Rob: Sey-  
mour Esq;  
of Hanford  
in the  
County of  
Dorset.

(a) Prov.  
18. 22.

Ch. 19. 4.

Ch. 12. 4.

(b) Eph.

5. 25. ad 33

Mar. 19. 5.

1 Pet. 3. 7.

## Dedicatory.

your fame, and doth, indeed, crown  
 all, is, (a) your perseverance. (a) Per-  
severantia  
tantum e-  
st. Bern.  
Ser. parv.  
Serm. 61.  
1 John 4.  
o, 19.  
Cant. 5. 16.  
 Your married estate hath not marred  
 your pious disposition. Your love  
 to husband and children, not aliena-  
 ted your love from him, who loved  
 you first, and is himself altogether  
 lovely. Your commands and cares  
 over your own servants hath not  
 made you negligent of your Master  
 in Heaven; nor your dome-  
 stick family-affairs, diverted your  
 conscience from living (b) as a (b) Eph.  
15, 16.  
 member of the household of  
 Faith, and the family of God.  
 Go on, I beseech you (for I know  
 your Christian wisdom and mode-  
 sty will turn my commendations into  
 admonitions) I beseech you, I say, to  
 go on, and to let the world see, that  
 Piety is not inconsistent with c Gal-  
lantry,

c Gratias  
 deo qui ha-  
 rum rerum  
 & gloria  
 transitorie  
 gloriosum  
 in vobis est  
 operatus  
 contemp-  
 tum. Bern.  
 ep. 23.

## The Epistle

lantry, that it is not (absolutely) impossible, for a Camel to goe through the eye of a needle, that one may be a Gentlewoman, or a Lady, & yet Elect; that noble dispositions do yet remain in (some) noble breasts; that some there may be, who are both rich in the world, and rich towards God. And let me further intreat you, to be alwayes learning that lesson, which can never be too exactly learnt, viz. (a) to know how to abound, and how to be full, how to use this world, as not abusing it, and to rejoyce, as if we rejoyced not, for the time is short. It is but a little time ere he that shall come will come. Wherefore, the Lord burn up within us the remainders of our dross and tin, that when this dross

fic

(a) Eſto  
rebus ac  
facultati-  
bus tuis in  
vitâ hâc  
uti velis,  
dummodo  
tui vel mor-  
tiens non  
obliviscaris  
& ad ejus  
cultum atq;  
honorem  
referendam  
tibi sub-  
ſtantiam  
tuam me-  
mineris, cu-  
jus tem-  
pere  
accepiſſe  
cognoſcis.  
Salvianus  
ad Eccleſ.  
cath. lib. 2.  
p. 407.

## Dedictory.

*the degenerate world shall be consumed by fire, there may not be found so much of the world in our hearts, as shall make us fit fuel for everlasting burnings. He give us more believing apprehensions, and lively affections, after the everlasting enjoyment of himselfe, in that Heaven of heavens, where they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, where they know none after the flesh, where they hunger and thirst no more, where they have perpetual light, yet no use of Sun or Moon, or any sublunary comforts, but are as the Angels of God (i.e.) fully at rest in their desires, because with the Lord, who is the center of spirits, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are such pleasures*

2 Pet. 3. 7.  
ad 14.

Mar. 12. 25

2 Cor. 5. 1  
16.  
Rev. 7. 16.

Rev. 21. 27

1 Thes. 4.  
17.  
Pl. 16. 11.



## The Epistle

svres for evermore, that they never thirst after the present delights of the sons of men, but scorne the very thoughts of any mortal enjoyments; & I am much mistaken in my conceptions of Eternity, if it prove not some addition to my joy before God for ever, if this book of mine (whoever else disregard it) may be (as I hope it will) an instrumental cause of reall addition to your grace, a help to your joy in believing, & a support to you in the time of need. But, this I leave wholly to the powerful blessing of that God, whose I am, and whom I serve. And, God forbid that I should sin against him, in ceasing to pray for you, that you may be inwardly fill'd with all the fulness of God, and may outwardly shine, not in costly

Theff. 2.  
9, 30.  
Phil 2, 16.



## Dedicatory.

costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) in good works, *that the dayes of your tranquillity may be lengthened, that you may see your childrens children, and peace upon Israel, that wherein other daughters have done vertuously, you may strive to excel them all; that so your children may rise up and call you blessed, and your husband also may praise you; that you may patiently run your race, and faithfully finish your course, that when you have conflicted with all the dangers and inconveniences of your pilgrimage, you may receive the end of your faith, and, in a good old age enter into rest. If my tongue doe not alway use these very words, yet my*  
soul

1 Tim:2.

9,10.

1 Pct.3.3,

4,5.

Prov. 31.

28,29.

**The Epistle, &c.**

*Soul shall thus pray for you without  
ceasing, till I my selfe shall cease to  
be, till when, I craue leave to sub-  
scribe,*

**Your ever devoted Ser-  
vant in the things of  
Christ,**

**J. O.**



TO THE  
READER.

*Good Reader,*



Have, according to the  
the Authors desire,  
perused this short  
Treatise, and finde it  
pithy, pious and plain. Thou  
wilt find nothing therein, that's  
either Factionous or Seditious, but  
that which tends to advance true  
piety: The Authors design be-  
ing not to gratifie any discon-  
tented Party, but to promote  
the power of Godlinesse in all.  
And

*To the Reader.*

And though the Title tell thee,  
that this booke is more peculi-  
arly intended for Child-bearing  
Women, yet thou wilt finde  
that much of the matter con-  
tained herein will be profi-  
table to any that shall read it se-  
riously, and improve it aright.  
That it may, Reader, be of good  
use to thy Soule, is the Prayer of

*Thine in our Lord,*

*Edw. Hick D.D.*

*Minister at Rood Church*

*London.*



TO THE  
*Christian Reader.*



OME have disputed,  
whether the inven-  
tion of *Printing and*  
*Guns* have done more  
harme then good. I  
shall not determine.

Onely this I dare say, that where  
Guns have slain *their thousands*, the  
Presse hath slain *its ten thousands*.  
And the latter kind of slaughter is  
more deplorable, because it reaches  
to mens Soules. Of *this misery* there  
*will be no end*, while controversies take up  
*our time*, or novelties take with our fan-  
cy. I having now some leasure (where-  
of, as even a Heathen said, I must  
give an account) I bethought my self,

(a)

wherein

## The Epistle

wherein I might be most serviceable to my generation, and bring most glory to *my God and Saviour*. Therefore knowing that the Presse will reach those who are otherwise out of my reach, I resolved in some lesser piece first, to make an essay how any thing of mine would passe in the world. And thinking it presumption (yea something worse) to transcribe, and pick both method, matter, and words, out of other authors, pretending a new treatise upon a beaten argument, which others had better handled before; finding also by experience, *that some late needlesse Writers have done the Church more disservice, by taking of the minds of men from more ancient Authors, than reall service by putting plain truth only into a finer mode*; I did therefore conclude, to accept of that for my theame, which all Divines (for ought I can finde) have as with one consent left untouched, as if they had bequeathed it to me to handle. So that I hope, all ingenuous Readers will be more candid

to the Reader.

did to me, whatever imperfections  
their critical eyes may here discover,  
considering, \* that I could not plow  
with another mans Heifer, nor boast in  
another mans Line of things made ready  
to my hand; but was forced to break  
the Ice my selfe, to walke in an un-  
trodden path, and to spin the thread  
out of my own bowels. And I hope,  
that among the many women with  
child, it may light into the hands of  
some, that are serious, humble, and  
teachable; whom I would intreat to  
peruse it diliberately, (if they please)  
a chapter in a day, seconding it with  
Meditation and Prayer; and if they  
thus go through it in order, I questi-  
on not, but if I never hear of them,  
yet God shall soon hear their voice  
of thanksgiving, for some benefit by  
it. As for others, I have this onely request  
to them, that they would let it passe qui-  
etly till some abler head shall furnish the  
world with a better: \* Which I should  
be right glad to see. And saving my  
reverence to those abler heads, I can-  
not understand why this point should

(a 2)

be

\* Iter e  
non trita  
authoribu  
via, nec  
qua pere-  
grinari a-  
nimus ex-  
petat.  
Nemo apu-  
nos qui id  
tentaverit  
Plin. præf  
hist. nar.  
Jud. 14. 18.  
2 Cor. 10.  
16.

\* Ego quod  
potui id fe-  
ci, nec im-  
pedio, si-  
quis in eo-  
dem circo  
currat al-  
palman.  
Lips. in  
Tacit.

## The Epistle

be held so inconsiderable, as to be below the studies of any of our voluminous learned Clarks, who yet have the leasure and condescention to write polemical Treatises, about very small matters. Surely, Women in this condition have their peculiar duties, and their peculiar motives to diligence in them; and their number is considerable. They are a worthy part of the Community, then especially, when breeding, for much of the comfort of the present generation, and the honour of God, and future being of his Church in succeeding generations, is concerned in those Infants yet un-borne. We know that their dangers are many, that their dayes are frequently shortned by travel, that their souls are precious, and therefore how precious should be \* to us any opportunity, \* of acquainting them with God, with their duty to him, to their own souls, and to the children they go with. Surely, our relation to, or Acquaintance with some of them, our Christian compassion that we owe to all of them, doth oblige us, not onely to wish their happy deliverance, but as occasion is offered, to promote

Gal. 6.

no.

Job. 12.

21.



*to the Reader.*

*mote their preparation for travell.*

And from this pious intention I suppose it was, that Mr. *Deering* at the end of his works, hath a Godly prayer, fitted for Women with child, and because I know not of any other, that hath given any such, I shall here transcribe it.

---

A Pray-

---

---

## A Prayer before child-birth.

**A**L thy wayes are just, Oh dear Father, and thy judgments are true altogether. For worthily doth man live in the sweat of his face, and the woman bring forth children with much pain and travel, and with great danger. Yea, O mercifull Father, this pain is not a sufficient punishment for the grievous transgressions wherewith we and our fore-fathers have transgressed thy most holy will. The punishment is in respect of our demerits too small, but in respect of our weaknesse too great for us without thee to endure. Wherefore as I acknowledge, O mercifull Father, this travel in child-birth, which now approacheth, to be a just reward of my manifold sins, so I acknowledge also thy ready Arm of defence, stretched out over me, and over all them that call upon thee in faith. Grant therefore O dear Father, that I may pray in faith, and patiently wait for that time of my travel, that I may thankfully and constantly endure it when it shall be presented:

to the Reader.

sent: knowing that though I then feel some  
tast of the reward of sin, yet I feel not all;  
and that little which I then feel, thou dost  
presently reward with comfort and glad-  
nesse, when a child is born into the world.  
The which comfortable and glad issue,  
grant me, O Lord, if it be thy good pleasure,  
and having received such fruit of my body;  
grant me moreover wisdom and strength  
to bring it up in thy fear, and to travel (as  
it were) again with it, till it be born again  
into a heavenly life, to the glory of thy holy  
name, and my greater joy: that so it may  
finally in Christ Jesus be partaker of those  
blessings, which thou dost plentifully rain  
down upon the faithfull and their seed for  
ever. And because I am not worthy to  
present this my suit to thy heavenly Ma-  
jesty of my self, a most wretched and  
sinfull woman, I offer it in the name, in the  
righteousnesse, and in the strength of my  
Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, praying  
furthermore as he taught us to pray, Our  
father &c.

They are also mentioned in the publick  
lyturgy, but where else I remember not.

Sure

## The Epistle

Luk. 19. 42.

Sure I am, that all big-bellyed women had need to remember themselves, and to consider the things that belong to their peace before they be hid from their eyes. For if women will make no other preparation for lying in, then what is common, if they onely get linnen and other necessaryes for the child, a nurse, a midwife, entertainment for the women that are called to their labour, a warme convenient chamber &c.

(Gravida  
corpora cu-  
are debent.  
ens item  
arū cūe-  
em desi-  
erat. Qua  
nim pro-  
reantur à  
matre in  
jus utero  
continentur,  
limentum  
piunt, ut  
terrā ea,  
a gig-  
antur ex  
Arist.  
lib. 7.

Which things I confesse every one according to their ability should be mindfull of, in time, foras I have shewed in a distinct Chapter in this Book (a) women in this condition should be very careful of their bodies while they are with child, and very careful of providing all possible helps and conveniences against their lying in, But all these may prove miserable comforters, they may perchance need no other linnen shortly but a winding sheet, and have no other chamber but a grave, no neighbours but worms; or if they be delivered while yet they retain such unwillingnesse  
of

*To the Reader.*

of mind to prepare for death, (as we say of all other deliverances granted to the ungodly) they are delivered (a) *in anger not in favour, with Gods curse not with his blessing*, and are (in all likelihood) reserved to the greater condemnation, when *their sin is repined*. Whereas, if they would seek the Lord while he may be found, if they would mind diligently the one thing necessary, if they would speedily fly to Christ for refuge, than they are safe, for whether they live or die *their souls cannot miscarry*. But of these things I have spoken more at large in the Book it self.

And now Reader let me draw to a conclusion. You must not expect from me the common complements of some writers, as that I should extenuate the worth of this Book (because 'tis mine) (a) or tell the Reader that it is un-

(a) Rich. Rogers his seven treatises treat. 6. c. 10. p. 193, edit. 4.

Psal. 32: 6.

1 Chron.

28. 9.

Cant. 3. 1.

Heb. 12. 17

Ila. 55. 6.

Luk. 10. 42

a) Siquidem tam inbecillia sunt hujus temporis judicia, ac penè tam nulla, ut neque qui legunt non tam considerent quid legant, quàm cujus legant, ij tam dictionis vim atque virtutem, quàm dictatoris cogitent dignitatem. Salvia. Salomô Epo. p. 334.

worthy

## The Epistle

worthy of his view, needs his pardon; and was wrested from me by the importunities of no man knows who, that else I should above all things have shoud to appear in Print &c. No, Let such strange dissemblers study a truer Apology for their false Apologie. When they have said never so much to their own disparagement, who believes them? Neither can I understand, how any honest man can Print a Book, and yet professe that he thinks none will be the wiser or better for reading of it. Let me therefore onely say this to the Reader, that I have in this piece, as small as 'tis, taken pains, and well considered of what I have written. The matter of it is generally Scriptural, and there is that truth of God in it, that commands your Christian regard. And God is my witnesse how often I implored his assistance in composing it, and his blessing on it when finished. That my labour will be accepted of the Saints is my greatest hope, but for praise or commendation from others, I am not sollicitous. In a word, I send it

*To the Reader.*

it(a) abroad with this confidence,  
that it will, by Gods blessing, do good  
to some. And I have this assurance,  
that there is nothing in it that can be  
hurtfull to any, that will either right-  
ly take it, or let it alone. Farewell in  
the Lord.

(a) Mens  
enim boni  
studii ac  
pii voti,  
etiam si  
affectum  
non invene-  
rit cepti  
operis, ha-

bet tamen premium voluntatis.. Salvian. pref. in lib. de gub. dei  
p. 3.

*Thy souls friend*

*J. O.*



*Salvian*



Salvian. prefat. in Lib. de gu-  
bern. Dei Pag. 2. & 3.

**O**Mnes enim in scriptis suis causas tantum egerunt suas, & propriis magis laudibus quam aliorum utilitatibus consulentes, non id facere adnisi sunt, ut salubres ac salutiferæ, sed ut scholastici ac disertis haberentur. Itaque scripta eorum aut vanitate sunt tumida, aut falsitate infamia, aut verborum seditatibus sordida, aut rerum obscœnitate vitiosa: Ut verè cum ingeniorum tantum laudem aucupantes tam indignis rebus curam impenderent, non tam illustrasse mihi ipsa ingenia quam damnassee videantur. Nos autem qui rerum magis quam verborum amatores, utilia potius quam plausibilia sectamur, neque id quærimus, ut in nobis inania seculorum ornamenta, sed ut salubria rerum emolumenta laudentur in scriptiunculis nostris, non leno cinia esse volumus sed remedia, quæ scilicet non tam ociosorum auribus placeant, quam egrotorum mentibus prosint, magnum ex utraque re, celestibus donis, fructum reportaturi.



# The CONTENTS.

## CHAP. I.

**O** *F a state of Pregnancy* page 1

## CHAP. II.

*Prayer the duty of women with child* p.19

## CHAP. III.

*Repentance the duty of women with child* 26

## CHAP. IV.

*Reading of Scriptures the duty of women with child* 34

## CHAP. V.

*Meditation the duty of women with child* 41

## CHAP. VI.

*Resignation to God, the duty of women with child* 60

## CHAP. VII.

*Dedication of the child to God, the duty of women with child* 64

## CHAP. VIII.

*Care of her own health, the duty of a woman with child* 68

## CHAP. IX.

*Preparation for death, the duty of those women with child, who never yet repented* 71

CHAP.

## **The Contents.**

### **CHAP. X.**

*Preparation for death the duty of godly women,  
when with child* 80

### **CHAP. XI.**

*To resolve upon some special return of thank-  
fulness, after their deliverance, is also the  
duty of women with child* 93

### **CHAP. XII.**

*The labour for faith in Christ, or, if they have  
faith, to endeavour to exercise it, in trust and  
dependance upon God for pardon of sin, is also  
the duty of women with child* 100

### **CHAP. XIII.**

*Trusting in the Lord for deliverance, the duty of  
women with child* 110

### **CHAP. XIV.**

*Patience in the midst of their pains, the duty of  
travelling women* 129.

en,  
80

---

uk-  
he  
93

Reader,

ve  
nd  
lfo  
00

of  
10

of  
9.

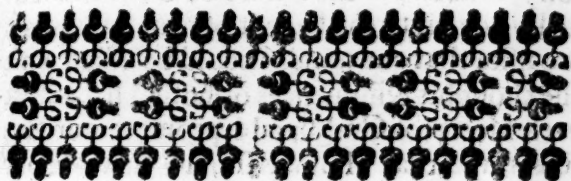
*Some faults will escape, take what  
care we can ; those that are, are  
very few, and they onely in mis-  
spelling, wherefore I thought not  
worth the while to trouble my  
self to note them, or thee with na-  
ming them.*

---

cr

Heads

Some of the will of the state  
concerning the state of the  
state of the state of the  
state of the state of the  
state of the state of the  
state of the state of the



A P R E S E N T  
F O R  
Teeming Women, &c.

CHAP. I.  
*Of a state of Pregnancy.*



**I**T is observable, that the great God, who is equally infinite in all his Attributes, yet hath styled himself, *rich in mercy, glorious in holinesse.* Surely he needs neither riches nor glory; He was rich enough to Himself, and glorious enough in Himself from everlasting. But behold, His *good Will towards men*, and the communicative nature of infinite goodness. Mercy enricheth us, Holiness glorifies us. By Mercy we partake of his Gifts, by Holiness we partake of his Nature. By Mercy we enjoy him, by Holiness we love him, resemble him, and glorifie him for ever. Now

Psal. 86. 5  
Eph. 2. 4-  
Exod. 12.  
12.

these two transcendent perfections do eternally cohabite in the nature of God, and mutually concur to the benefit of man ; it is most requisite that our minds should be filled with the thoughts & influences of both. That is, that each Mercy of God should promote our Holiness, and that Holiness should encrease our sense of Mercies. It being therefore my present business, that women with child may be *in a holy frame, and thereby fitted for the hour of danger approaching*, I thought good to mind them of this first, that 'tis a mercy of much value to be with child in a state of Matrimony.

That this is a mercy, will appear plainly by these few considerations.

1. 'Tis one end of marriage, that there might be a succession of generation after generation, that the race of mankind may not be confuted, and disorderly, as among Beasts; *1 Theſ. 4. 4* nor extinguished, nor dishonoured; but may continue in a legitimate line, and that God *Mal. 2. 15.* might have a *holy seed*.

2. That it might appear to be a Mercy, God hath, by Angels, Revelations and Miracles, at sundry times, of old, assured some good women that he would give this blessing to their wombs. Thus, in *Gen. 17. 16.* *I will bless her, & give thee a son also of her; yea I will bless her, and she shall be a mother also of nations.* Though upon this strange promise we find *Abraham* full of wondering, ver. 17. and *Sarah* his wife laughing,

laughing, ch. 18 12. Both questioning, at first, how this could be, yet afterwards God doth renew his promise, and they lay aside any further doubt; and the word of the Lord spoken by angels was fulfilled, Gen. 21. 1. The Lord visited Sarah, as he had said, and did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. We find of the Patriarchs also, that they found favour w<sup>th</sup> God in like manner, concerning the fruit of their womb, ever acknowledging it as the gift of God, and adoring the gracious providence of the (a) God and Father of all men. When they blessed their posterity they carefully inserted this in their propheticall prayers. This last blessing of a dying Patriarch, though it be sometime, or in some part expressed in form of petition, yet in the intent and effect thereof alway amounted to a prediction. Thus Isaac to Jacob, God Almighty blesse thee and make thee fruitfull, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people. Thus Jacob to Joseph: Joseph is a fruitfull bough, even a fruitfull bough, whose branches run over the walls. The Almighty shall blesse thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breast, and of the womb. In which places God is still mentioned as the original of this blessing, and the supreme efficient cause of the pregnancy of the womb, and increase of posterity. It was

(a) Nihil de generationibus aut seminibus nescitur, si ea non operetur Deus. Aug. in Ps. 118. Gen. 28.

Chap. 49. 22. 25.

Judg. 13. 3 the same God that sent his Angel to the wife of *Manoah*, to tell her that *she should conceive and bear a son*. 'Tis out of question, that to these persons it was a mercy to have issue, yea, a publick blessing to many generations; for the seed of *Abraham* was the onely visible Church on earth, the onely people that turned from Idols to serve the living God. And *Sampson* the son of *Manoah* was, in his time, the onely Judge: and Champion of *Israel*, and Type of Christ. But it seems doubtfull, whether therefore all other parents can call their children Blessings; or indeed, whether the faithfull have any such cause to promise themselves comfort in their posterity, without some like revelation or testimony from heaven, as they had? To this I answer, that all the seed of *Abraham* (I mean, that continue in the faith of *Abraham*) have exceeding great and precious promises to rest satisfied in, that extend to them all, in all ages; I mean, Gods promises of giving, and blessing children to them.

3. And that shall be my third proof. If God promise distinctly, and frequently, that they shall see their posterity, and their seeds seed, then we must thankfully enumerate it among his rich favours to mankind. This was the blessing to *Adam* in innocency; God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And to

Gen. I. 28

Gen. 9. 1: *Noah*; God blessed *Noah* and his sons, and said unto

child



unto them, be fruitfull, and multiply, and replenish the earth. This blessing was given them as the common parents and stocks, of whom the future generations should succeed; and therefore we find it transmitted by other Scriptures to succeeding ages, and will continue while the patience and good will of God towards man continues. Thus the Psalmist; *Loe children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward.* Ps. 127. 3. Likewise in the following Psalm, *Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house, thy children like olive plants round about thy table.* Psal. 128 3, 4. Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. Again, the Prophet Isaiah hath the same promise from God to his people Israel, thus emphatically expressed, *I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing upon thy off-spring, and they shall spring up as among the grasse, as willows by the water-courses.* Isa. 43. 3, 4 The like promises of multiplying their seed are frequently to be found in other Scriptures, such as those in the margin, which the diligent Reader may peruse at his leisure. Jer. 23. 3.  
Ezek. 36.  
II.  
Zech 2. 4. These may suffice to evince the truth of this 3<sup>d</sup>. particular; That they who believe the Lords Prophets, that reverence his promises, and embrace his providences, cannot but subscribe with their hands to the Lord, and acknowledge that child-bearing is his blessing, and children are his reward.

4. Whatsoever the people of God have  
B 3 ordinarily

(a) *Paula* ordinarily asked of God (a) according to his  
*ante votis* will, that cannot but be a mercy when it is  
*quam utero* received. That such prayers were not unwar-  
*concepisti.* rantable, is certain; for either some of them  
*Hier. ad* were stirred up by an extraordinary instinct of  
*Latit.* spirit, to ask that which God hath intended in a  
singular and unexpected manner to give; or the  
common spirit of supplication put the innocent  
desire of nature into a posture of acceptance  
with God; they asking children of him, request-  
ed no more then the usuall course of his provi-  
dence, and the general concurrence of his pro-  
mises aforementioned led them to expect. Abra-  
ham had received the promise of children, but  
long time being passed, and his wife not yet  
conceiving, thoughts began to grow in his  
mind, what the intent of God should be; and  
therefore when God doth again renew his  
covenant to him, he breaks out into this ear-  
nest expresseion, *Lord, what wilt thou give me,*  
*seeing I go childlesse?* as if he should say,  
*Lord, thou hast given me a great estate, but I*  
*have no heir; and what comfort can I take*  
*in all other enjoyments, seeing the main*  
*thing which thou hast promised is yet behind,*  
*and I am still childless.* (b) And therefore  
either take away these blessings, or give me  
the chief blessing of my house, even a son to  
be born of my wife. This prayer you know  
God accepted, and answered according to  
his desire, even then when his body was old,  
and his wife, *by nature*, incapable of concei-  
ving.

Gen. 15. 2.

b) B. Halls  
*contempl.*  
 l. 10, p. 117

ving. I suppose this dealing of God with *Abraham his friend*, and the father of the faithfull, put some life in the hopes of his posterity, who in the next and succeeding generations, did seek to God in the like case. His son *Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren, and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebecca his wife conceived, &c.* Gen. 35. 21.

When *Rachel* had no children, she said unto *Jacob*, Give me children, or else I die. Mark his answer, *Am I in Gods stead, who hath withholden from thee the fruit of the womb?* Gen. 30. 1, 2.

as if he had said, Look to the supreme cause, to the everlasting Father, and go to him by prayer, and beg this blessing of him; and then, if God answer thy request, thou wilt be a mother of children. And no question but she thus did; for afterwards it is said, that *God remembered Rachel, and hearkened to her, (that is, he answered her prayers) and opened her womb, and she conceived.* The like course was long after taken by others, especially by *Hannah*, who having no children, prayed with no little earnestness, yea, poured out her soul in this business, *That God would look upon his handmaid, and remember her, and not forget her, and give her a man-child.* I Sam. 1. 11. 17.

And old *Eli* second this request, and adds, *The Lord of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she conceived and bare a son, and called him Samuel, because she had asked him of the Lord.*

Ezek. 36.  
37.

I need add no more to this particular, but that God himself commanded his people to seek him for the performance of his promise, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.* So that if Gods command be any motive to prayer, or his promise any encouragement to faith, then they had ground enough both for faith and prayer.

Gen. 20.  
17. 18.

\* See Bishop

Richard-  
son on the  
Pentateuch  
in Locum.

Gen. 15.

2. & 30. 1.

1 Sam. 1.

5. 6.

Leviticus.

20. 20. 21.

So also of  
Tyre

Isa. 23. 4.

Isa. 4. 1.

5 Barrennes of the wombe was frequently in Scripture threatned as a judgment; and they that felt this evil did earnestly bewaile it as no small affliction, therefore fruitfullnesse must needs be a considerable mercy. 'Twas a Judgment on *Abimelech*, of which they were not healed but by the prayers of *Abraham*, \**God having closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech.* Yea *Abraham* himself took no comfort in all his riches, nor *Rachel* in enjoyment of *Jacob*, nor *Hannah* in the company of *Elkanah*, but was in bitterness of soul. 'Tis threatned as the punishment of incest, to be childlesse. And the Prophet threatening the greatest of temporall calamities to the *Jews*, mentions this in the last place, as the greatest of all the rest, *That seven women should take hold of one man.* That is, though Marriage and Majesty endure no competitors, yet the Wars should so consume the male sex, that many women should sollicite one man (contrary to the innate modesty of that

that sex) and be content with any terms, viz. to eat their own bread, and weare their own apparell, that is, to be no charge to him for any thing; onely let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach; that is, let us be accounted and used as thine, and why? to take away our reproach; so that barrenness was esteemed no small reproach. For God in blessing Israel tells them, *that none should be barren amongst them, but that they should be blessed above all people, and that there shall not be a male or female barren among them, nor among their cattell.* When the Lord would punish Coniah, this is the punishment; write ye *this man childlesse*; whether he were without posterity, or they without prosperity, or succession to his throne, is not materiall to the businesse in hand; it sufficeth, that the expression takes it for granted, that to be childlesse was a curse, and a reproach in Israel. So that, of Michal (the daughter of Saul) who mocked David, it is mentioned, as a memorable and severe judgment, *that she had no child to the day of her death.*

6 God hath, in his Scriptures, ever taken to himself the praise of this work; and his people have ever acknowledged it as his gift & mercy, when they conceived and bare children. Thus the wives of Jacob. Thus Jacob himself, answering his brother Esau; *these are the children which God hath graciously given thy servant.* Thus Hannah, Elizabeth, and

Exod. 23.

26.

Dent. 7.

14.

Jer. 22.

30.

2 Sam 6.

25.

Gen. 30.

6. 17. 22.

c. 35. 5.

Psal. 113.

Facunditas  
feminarum

et casta

vota filios

desideran-

tium ad

quem per-

tinent, nisi

ad Domi-

num De-

um? Ang.

Emarr, in

Psal. 66.

and others, still their phrase is, *God opened their wombs, God rolled away their reproach, God gave them children &c.* He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyfull mother of children. Seeing, therefore, by this cloud of Scripture-testimonies 'tis evident, that women are not with child but by the mercy and gift of God, I must adde a few inferences from what I have said.

I That none be dejected at a state of barrennesse, though among the *Jews* it was esteemed so great an affliction. If the age of one or both parties render you not incapable, you may with modesty and moderation make your request known to God, and then rest satisfied in his pleasure concerning you. For though the posterity of *Abraham* did all desire that the promised seed might come of them (*as some do uncertainly conjecture*) and had also too high esteem of temporal blessings, and carnal apprehensions of promised blessings did much possesse the mind of the generality; yet we are now under a *better testament*, containing exceeding great and precious promises of things *Spiritual*. If therefore we stick too much on the letter of old-Testament promises, we shall commit as great an errour in our faith, as the *Jews*, by resting in the bare letter of the precepts, ran into gross error in their practice. God never delighted in their most glorious and costly ceremonies, unlesse they gave him their hearts; and now he accepts of

in-



## (11)

internal worship with simplicity and spirituality of mind, without any further desire of those pompous observations. So let us learn to *worship God without their Rites, and to love God though without their mercies.* Let us count riches and posterity nothing without God, and God sufficient without either of them. If Christ be ours, every thing needfull is ours. If we be the Sons and Daughters of God, it shall be no unhappinesse, if we have neither Sons nor Daughters of our own. There is then no curse in what we have, no need of what we have not. <sup>a</sup> Where naturall impossibilities doe hinder the fecundity of the wombe, they should also (if known) have hindred marriage. But when the sterility is meerly accidentall, from some such present prevailing infirmity as discomposes the body of either party; it may by the blessing of God upon medicinall helps be lawfully and successfully removed. But when the cause is unknown, and unfruitfullnesse seems meerly judicall, *viz.* immediately inflicted by the hand of God, in that case, prayer is the Proper course, that he who *shuts the womb*, as he did the wombs in the house of *Abimelech* would open them again, as he did theirs upon the prayer of *Abraham*. It may be, he will grant thy petition, as he hath done of some that for above twenty years in a state of marriage went childlesse, yet at last *he made the solitary to dwell in families, and gave them children*

John 4:  
Rom. 14.

Dr. Gouge  
of domest.  
duties.

Luke 1.  
13.  
Psal. 10. 17.  
Psal. 145.  
19.



Perkins  
 Cas. of  
 consc. lib.  
 2. c. 6. qu.  
 4.  
 Reynolds  
 on Hof. 14.  
 1. 2. Serm.  
 1. p. 53.  
 John 5.  
 15.  
 (c) Deus  
 non semper  
 audit ad  
 voluntatem  
 vel volup-  
 tatem, at  
 Semper ex-  
 audit ad  
 salutem.  
 Isidor. de  
 summo bo-  
 no. 1.3 c. 3.  
 (d) Ward  
 on Mar. 8.  
 pag. 451.  
 (e) Bonus  
 qui non tri-  
 buit quod  
 volumus, ut  
 tribuat  
 quod malio-  
 mus. Aug.  
 epist. 34.  
 (f) Mat.  
 22. 30.

*children like olive plants round about their table.*  
 Or perhaps he will not yet answer thee, to  
 exercise thy faith, prayer, and dependence  
 in waiting upon him; or perhaps, he will de-  
 ny thee this mercy at last, to exercise thy pa-  
 tient submissivenesse to his Will, and thy  
 heavenly-mindednesse, and wisdom in seek-  
 ing some better blessing. Sure it is, *thy pray-  
 ers shall returne into thine own bosom* with  
 some *answer of peace*; and if we aske aright,  
 we shall receive (c) according to Gods choice,  
 if not according to our own. He hath variety  
 of blessings, which, like the stars of heaven,  
 differ from one another in glory. Therefore  
 blesse his name, if by this providence he pro-  
 mote in thy heart humility, faith, patience,  
 or any other grace; (d) seeing its better to be  
 fruitfull in grace, then fruitfull in children.  
 If he give us his favour (e) thats a blessing of  
 more value. *The Angels neither marry, nor  
 are given in marriage, yet have happinesse e-  
 nough in God.* Let him be to thee *worth ten  
 Sons.* In a word, I say of these *certain cares,  
 and uncertain comforts*, that he who hath none  
 of them hath *lesse incumbrance here, and lesse  
 to reckon for hereafter.*

2 Tis an an addition to the mercy, when  
 God gives children in a state of marriage. Tis  
 a mercy to be kept in a single estate from the  
 unclean libidinous practices of beastly sinners;  
 and to be at last happily entred upon that  
 state of matrimony, which God appointed and  
 hath

hath sanctified as his ordinance, for preventing of fornication; and 'tis also, I say, a greater blessing, when he is pleased to Crown the chaste embraces of wedlock with a hopefull conception. Oh how dreadfull are the scripture-examples of many women, whom God having partly or totally left to *their vile affections and inordinate lusts*, having prostituted their chastity, brought shame upon *Israel*, and disparaged the innate modesty of the female sex; grew at last past feeling, and spent their life in common whoredome, till their sin was come to a ripeness: But alas, in *these last days*, the sin of incontinency is grown more *perillous* by its commonness, and also by the impunity of our intemperate Grandees, whose example herein gives a law to others. And surely those who are priviledged from punishment here, shall find it a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who hath said, *whoremongers and adulterers I will judge*, i.e. though the secrecy of their actions, the potency of their persons, or the negligence of Magistrates, may secure them for a while; yet there is nothing so secret but is under his eye; nothing so great, but is under his power. And therefore in that day of vengeance the *works of darknesse shall be brought to light, and the loftinesse of man shall be brought low*; and they who were on earth inflamed with lust, shall smart for ever in the flames of hell; unless with tears of repentance

1 Cor. 7.  
2, 3, 4, 5.

2 Tim. 3:  
1, 3.

Heb 10. 31  
Heb. 13. 4.

1 Cor. 4. 5  
Isa. 2. 17.

1 Cor. 6. 9.

tance they quench these fires of concupiscence, and with *water drawn out of the wells of salvation* quench those (otherwise) *everlasting burnings*. But to return to my purpose,

Isa. 2. 3:

Isa. 33. 14.

I mentioned before the dreadfulnes of the examples in this kind recorded in Scripture, and verily when I read the Polygamy of *Lamech* a murtherer, I wonder not; but considering the polygamy of the Patriarchs, of *David*, and the licentious excess of *Solomon*, I stand amazed at their irregularity, and Gods connivance and longanimity. When I read the incest of *Absalom*, and *Herod*, I wonder not; but when I think of *Lot*, *Judah*, and the incestuous *Corinthian*, my soul trembles. We

Gen. 4. 19.

1 Cor. 5:

1, 2, &c.

B. Halls

Contempl.

l. 10. p. 182

Perkins

Case of

conf. l. 2. c.

qu. 3. p. 89

Judg. 11.

36, 37.

count their condition sad, who vow a single life, and enter themselves under sinfull and needless bonds of perpetual virginity, as the cloystered Nuns among the Papists; and theirs yet sadder, who by the rigour of unwise parents, or by some remediless accident, are kept all their life from marrying, as was the daughter of *Jephthah*, and others; whose conditions are represented in sacred story, as most sad and deplorable. But they are most generally pitied and lamented of all, who desiring to possess their vessels in sanctification and honour, are surprized by some lecherous villain, ravished and defloured. A judgement

Psal. 78. 63

Isa. 13. 16.

Lam. 5. 11

Zech. 14. 2

(a) sometimes threatned in Scripture, as a fruit of Gods greater indignation, against that people whom he thus leaves to the licentious

ous

ous power of barbarous enemies. ( See the places in the margine ) Yet *I* count them *most miserable*, who having yielded their bodies to venereous abuses in their youth, are with child by whoredom, and are either disappointed of marriage with their wicked lover, or marry not till their shame appears.

For who can expresse their manifold feares, cares and sorrows? one while, perhaps, they hide their sin (as long as they can) but still while they muse, *a fire burns within them*, and they feel the pangs of an accusing conscience, before they feel the pangs of their travel. Unlesse their hearts be *harder then the nether milstone*; which if it be, their misery is the greater. Sometimes they contrive wayes of preventing its birth by wicked adventuring on such *expulsive receipts*, as may prevent their shame. Or perhaps they are plodding how to *make away* the infant, as soon as it is born; (a) *Bishop* or at best, to *expose it secretly*, that the Parish Halls may keep it. Or if it be safely born, and the parent acknowledge it, yet while it lives 'tis an *lib. 10. p. 162.* (a) *indelible monument* of their *infamous transgression*. For which cause, (b) (even for their *Engl. Annot. on Gen. 19.* future shame) God suffers *unlawfull connexions* to take effect. 36.

I could willingly have enlarged on this point, and given exhortations, warnings, and directions, to women in this sad condition; but perceiving that my little treatise begins to swell beyond my expectation, I shall pretermitt

mit it for the present (intending, if God will, to write distinctly and purposely of that subject, because I know not of any that hath done it;) only what I have already said may give just occasion to chaste virgins, to pray for *the gift of continency*; and to honest women, when with child, to praise God for preserving them from the sin and misery aforementioned, and granting them conception by their own husbands, in the comfortable estate of Matrimony. For we have all alike wicked hearts, and therefore ought to give glory to

1 Cor. 4. 7 God, who onely *makes us to differ*.

3. Though it be a choice mercy, yet it is not to be interpreted as a sure token of Gods love. *No man knowes Gods love or hatred by any external comforts.* They are distinguished alike to the good and bad, to the just and to the unjust. (a) A learned man reports of a town in Spain, consisting of a hundred families, all inhabited by the seed of one old man then living; so that the youngest knew not what to call him, the Spanish tongue having no expression higher then the great Grandfathers Father. To reckon up the numerous issue of some prolifical parents mentioned in profane Histories, is as needless as easy. Scripture also doth abundantly satisfy in this, that *the wicked also are full of children*; so that outward blessings do not alway make a blessed man. (b) But lest they should be accounted evil, God sometimes gives them

(a) Lud.  
vives, in  
Aug. de  
Civ. Dei  
l. 15. c. 8.

Psa. 17. 14  
(b) Spencers things  
new and  
old, p. 107.

to his people; and lest they should be accounted our chief good, he sometime bestows them upon the wicked.

4. I cannot see how those women can be mindfull of the mercy of God, in granting them conception, that (a) either

refuse (without necessary impediment) to nurse their children themselves, or count many children a burden, and are therefore grieved (if having many children already) they find themselves with child again. Doth not (b) even

*nature teach us, that the sea-monsters draw out their breasts and give suck to their young?* doth not the Lion

with infinite pains and hazard seek prey for his young ones? doth not the Halcyon sit close on her eggs (c)

and while the weather holds fair, ply their nourishment with all diligence, whence good dayes are called *Halcyon days*? Is this there-

fore their thankfulness to God for so great a mercy, to refuse to embrace in their arms, and nourish at their breasts, the fruit of their womb, when God joynd the blessings of the breast and the blessings of the womb together.

(d) Doth the God of Nature make Ladies and Gentlemen without breasts, or doth he give them breasts in vain, or will they immediately go with naked breasts, and yet be ashamed to use them?

(a) *Quid est hoc contra naturam, imperfectum ac dimidiatum, matrem genas peperisse, & statim abjecisse, aluisse in utero sanguine suo nescio quid quod non viderit, non alere autem nunc suo lacte quod videat jam viventem, jam hominem, jam matris officia implorantem, &c.*

Aul. Gell. noct. Atr. lib. 12 cap. 1.

(b) 1 Cor. II. 14.

Lam. 4 3.

(c) *Ulyss. Aldrovandi, Ornithol. l. 20*

Plin. nat. hist. lib. 20. cap. 32.

(d) Charon of wisdom, lib. 3. cap. 14 p. 418.



Rom. I. Is it not a prodigie in nature, to see a woman  
 Isa. 49. 15. without breasts? and is it not as foul a defect  
 Pl. 131. 2. to be without natural affection? what greater  
 Exod. 2. 9 solœcism in manners, then for a woman to  
 Mat. 2. 11. forget her sucking child? verily this makes  
 some of our proudest Dames more vile then the  
 beasts that perish. And therefore, let all per-  
 sons of honour cease hereafter to glory in  
 their shame; and let them think it their duty,  
 when God makes them mothers, to make  
 themselves nurses; imitating the example of  
 Sarah, who, though a Lady of great (a) e-  
 steem, riches and honour, though aged and  
 weak, yet refused not this motherly office.  
 And they, that upon any account, but plain  
 necessity (i.e. want of strength or milk) do  
 neglect this duty, whether for laziness, lust,  
 pride, or loving the fashion more then their  
 children, they deserve that God should curse  
 them with a miscarrying wombe and dry  
 breasts.

But there is another folly too common,  
 and that is, if they have a great charge of  
 children already, to wish and resolve to have  
 no more, and to be cast down with grief and  
 anxious care, if they find themselves with  
 child again. Alas, what is this but to repine at  
 Gods mercies, and to murmur at his bles-  
 sings? what greater dishonour can we put  
 upon the Word of God, which sayes, *Happy*  
*is he that hath his quiver full of them?* Besides,  
 who knows, but that this last child may be an  
 eminent

(a) Engl.  
 Annot. on  
 Gen. II:

Hof. 9. 14.

Pl. 127. 5.



eminent instrument to Gods glory, a vessel of use in his generation, and a blessing to the whole family ? But so much for the first point; That it is a mercy to be with child.

---

## CHAP. II.

*Prayer, The duty of women with child.*

I Have been longer then I intended on the first Chapter, to prove, that it is a mercy for women to be with child, I shall endeavour to be more brief in the things following; which are the severall duties that pertain to women in that estate. If they make any conscience of fitting themselves for their travell, or would have any hope of Gods assistance therein, I shal desire them to give heed to the Scripture-rules here gathered by my serious care, for their direction and consolation.

And I shall begin with that which they must begin with, go on with, and end with; and that is, Prayer.

Dr. Gouge  
of domest.  
duties, tr.  
6. p. 508.

And seeing there be many requisites, that concur to render a prayer acceptable, I shall instance in some few, and pass by the rest, which are many, and are largely handled by other Authors.

You must be carefull to direct your prayers to the right object, that is, to the whole Trinity,

(a) Perkins  
cas. of  
conf. lib.

2. c. 4. q. 1.

(b) Cob-  
bets treat.  
of prayer.

part 3. ch.

12. p. 541.

Mar. 28. 19.

Joh. 16. 23.

(c) Perkins  
ubi supra, c.

6. qu. 1. § 2

(d) Aug.

de Civ. Dei

18. c. 18.

21. lib. 9.

c. 9. 17.

(e) Dr.

Beard of

Antichrist.

tr. 2. part.

3 c. 3. P340

341. &c.

(f) also

Nascio,

Partunda,

Ageria,

and many

more.

Rosses

view of all

religions

4. pag. 126

(g) Medes

apostacy of

the latter

times. p.

129. 130.

To God the Father, in the name of Christ, by the assistance of his Spirit. (a) Not but that, on some occasions, it is both lawfull and proper to invoke the second, or third person of the trinity; but usually we are to aske of the Father, in the name of Christ, and to such asking is his promise made. But that which I chiefly aime at, is to warne you to call upon God onely, (b) and not upon any Saint or Angel, as the manner is among Idolatrous Papists; whose devotions are divided among so many Saints, that 'tis no easy matter to reckon their meer nāes. Let it suffice us, that this their folly hath nothing of warrant from the Scripture, but is meerly derived from the practice of those vile heathens, who not liking to retain God in their knowledge, became vain in their imaginations (d). As the Ethnicks had several Gods and Goddeses appropriated to several Countries, sciences, callings and diseales; so have the papists assigned a particular Saint for all occasions. (e) *Lucina* was called upon by the Heathens, to give deliverance from the pains in child-birth, and the Papists have given this office of chief midwife to St. *Margaret*. (f) And the better to colour the business, they tell us a story in theirs *Legenda aurea*, (which with many other of like credit were taken out of that lying Greeke, *Simeon Metaphrastes*) that this St. *Margaret* suffering Martyrdom under *Dioclesian*, as she was preparing to die prayed to God, that whosoever

'ever should worship the Tabernacle of her  
 'Body, and build an oratory *in her name*,  
 'and therein offer spiritual sacrifice, yea that  
 'who should read or remember her name,  
 'might have *remission of sin*, and deliverance  
 'from all evill, with much more to the same  
 'purpose. And presently there was a great  
 'Earthquake, and the Lord Himself with a  
 'host of holy Angels, standing by her, said  
 'to her, be of good cheere, and feare not, for  
 'I have heard thy prayers, I have fulfilled,  
 'and will in due time fulfill, whatsoever thou  
 hast asked, even as thou hast asked it. But  
 if this Goddesse be not sufficient, yet they  
 have their *Lady Mary*, for an universal medi-  
 atrix, to whom they, without the least shame  
 of their *wretched blasphemy*, attribute as much  
 as to God the Father, and Jesus Christ, as  
 may be seen by their many fragments of pray-  
 ers to her, *in their missals, rosaries, and our*  
*Ladies Psalter*. And lest any should doubt  
 of present help from the Virgin, they tell  
 many wicked unclean stories of her not fit to  
 be transcribed; and among the best *this is*  
*one*; (a) That a holy Abbess, notwithstanding  
 'her vow and pretence of chastity, was (*as the*  
 '*manner is in their unneryes*) got with child,  
 'and the Virgin *Mary* came and plaid the mid-  
 'wife for her, and sent the bastard by two  
 'Angels to a certain hermite to be brought  
 up. (b) *Sure this bastard had good luck, to*  
*escape the common cruelty of those Nuns, who*

(a) Vin-  
 cent. hist.  
 lib. 7. c. 86.

(b) witness  
 the Anato-  
 my of the  
 English  
 Nunnery  
 at Lisbon  
 in Portu-  
 gale. p. 12

use for the most part to kill, and then to convey into some secret place, their base-borne infant. But I hope the very naming of these foul absurdities will alienate any Christian heart from praying to St. *Mary*, or St. *Margaret*, in this or any other extremity; but rather let them resolve, with the woman of Canaan, to come to Christ. Of whom (a) Chrysostome observes (three or four times) that he came to Christ without any mediator, and had a happy answer. And (b) another Ancient reckons the worship of the blessed Virgin, or any other Saints, a doctrine of devils.

Sure it is, that the Son of God who hath one Will, and one Essence with the Father, and whom God beareth alway, hath graciously authorised us to aske in his name, with exceeding great and precious promises, that it shall be given them, that they shall find, and that it shall be opened unto them. And as sure I am, that there is none in heaven besides him, nor any other name given under heaven, for there is but one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. He is the way, the truth, and the life. The way, whereby our prayers have access into the Fathers presence; the truth, whereby the Fathers Will is revealed to us; and the life, whereby we enjoy the glory and presence of God for ever. Now, who would desire to walke by

star-light, when the Sun shines at noon day; or to be beholden to the borrowed righteousness of any Romish Saints, when the Sun of righteousness himself is risen with healing in his wings? If our Saint-worship were tolerable, methinks it should have been in the dayes of *Moses*, and the Prophets; but our adversaries the Papists do confesse, that this Doctrine and practice was then altogether unknown. And if the *Israel* of God did never petition *Abraham*, *Isaac*, or *Jacob*, *Noah*, *Daniel*, or *Job*, to intercede for them; much lesse doth this foolery become us, to whom a Saviour is born, and to whom a Son is given, who by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, i. e. hath made perfect provision for his Saints, that their prayers shall through him be received while they live, and their souls received when they die. Therefore let others, if they will not be dissuaded, fetch a compasse about by the mediation of canonized Saints; but let us who have received the truth as it is in *Jesus*, hold fast our profession, and goe by him onely to the Father. In a word; They that expect the least crumb of comfort by the mediation of Saints shall speed no better then *Dives*, in beseeching *Abraham* for a drop of water to coole his tongue in hell. But leaving these wretches to their incurable folly, let us proceed.

Tis not sufficient for women, or any other, to pretend a good heart towards God, but they

Ira. 9 6

Heb. 10. 14

Eph. 4. 21.

Heb. 4. 14.

Iohn 6.

45. 14. 6.

Luk. 16.

24.

Rom 8.26 *Must also offer him the calves of their lips. I confess, the chief requisite of a praying Christian is to lift up the heart to God, in desires and groans that cannot be uttered, to flie to him for help in distress, and to make him our rock of defence. As the Israelites, when affliction was upon them, they remembered that God was their rock, and the most high God their redeemer.* (a) Of this the Apostle speaks, *Pray continually*, that is, mentally; but, I say, this is not all, we must *glorifie God with our bodies and spirits*, which are his; we must *lift up our hands with our hearts to God in the heavens*; we must *bow our knees to the father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and not keep silence, but utter our requests with our tongues, and open our mouths, that our lips may utter his praise, and that we may with verbal expressions quicken our selves, in *making our requests known to him, with supplication and prayer*. We must offer our *strong cries*, and *smite on our breasts*, with the Publican, and *bemoane our selves*, with Ephraim, and *seek the Lord with weeping, and with supplication*.

As for the many qualifications required in the Person and Duty, I shall summe them up in the words of a most learned Divine. (b) 'God is so holy, and jealous of his worship, that he expects there should be preparation in our accesses to him. Preparation of our persons, by purity of life; preparation of our services, by choice of matter; preparation of our hearts,

Psal. 78.35  
(a) Perkins cases  
of Consc.  
lib. 2. c. 5.

Lam. 3. 41  
Isa. 62. 7.

(b) Dr. Reynolds  
on Hos. 14.  
.p. 13.  
Job 11. 13  
Luke 15.  
17. 18.



' hearts, by finding them out, stirring them  
 ' up, fixing them, fetching them in, and cal-  
 ' ling together all that is within us to prevail  
 ' with God. (And a little after, he addes)  
 ' We must attend to Gods will, as the rule of  
 ' our prayers, to his precepts & promises, for  
 ' the matter of our prayers, & to the guidance  
 ' of his holy Spirit, as the life and principle of  
 ' our prayers, without which we know not  
 ' what to ask. Prayers thus regulated are  
 ' most seasonable and soveraign duties in  
 ' times of trouble. The key which openeth a  
 ' door of mercy; the sluice which keepeth out  
 ' an inundation of judgements. *Jacob* wre-  
 ' stled, and obtained a blessing, *Amos* prayed,  
 ' and removed a curse. The woman of  
 ' *Canaan* will not be denied with a de-  
 ' nial.

As for other circumstances, conditions,  
 modes, and concomitants of Prayer, as Faith,  
 Humility, Sincerity, Importunity, Patience,  
 &c. I shall refer the Reader to those many  
 English Authors, which have purposely and  
 profitably handled this subject, and so crave  
 leave to go on to what follows.

2 Sam. 7.  
 27.  
 Isa 64. 7.  
 Pl. 57. 7, 8.  
 2 Chr. 30.  
 19.  
 1 Joh. 5. 14.  
 2 Sam. 7.  
 25.  
 Rom. 8. 36.  
 Aug. ep.  
 105. & ep.  
 121. c. 15.  
 Hof. 12. 4.  
 Am. 7. 1. 7.  
 Mat. 13.  
 24. 27.  
 Mr. Parre,  
 his Abba  
 Father.  
 D. Wilkins  
 his Gift of  
 prayer.  
 Mr. Cobbet  
 his practi-  
 cal disc. of  
 prayer.



## C H A P. III.

*Repentance the duty of women with child.*

**R**epentance is never out of season, except with Esau and Judas we go about it too late. 'Tis the common duty of all, whether married, or unmarried, whether with child, or not, to renew the daily practice of Repentance; but, as the Scriptures abundantly testify, it is *most especially requisite*, when afflictions are felt or feared, and dangers approach; so that it must needs be seasonable for women, in this condition, to renew their repentance without delay. For whereas it is unsafe to trust to our former repentance, lest it be found defective and unsound, therefore the surest course is to repent again and again. Who among the daughters of *Eve* can remember the sin of her who was first in the transgression, *without shame and sorrow*? And yet while you blame her folly in eating the forbidden fruit, the guilt thereof, without repentance, will redound upon your selves. Her sin was turning from the Creator to the Creature; Repentance is a returning from sin, self, the world, and the tempter, to God. *And while you carry a burthen in your wombs, then, if ever, you had need to be eased of the heavier burthen of sin, which cannot be done with-*

out repentance. You must repent of the miscarriages of your lives, if you would be provided against the danger of a miscarrying womb. You must willingly endure the pangs of repentance, if you would safely bear the pangs of your travel. You must use your self to godly sorrow in the time of your strength, if you expect any comfort from God in the hour of your pain. You must humble your self before God, if you desire that God should then raise you up. You must take out the sting of sin by repentance, and then afflictions cannot hurt you. In your health remember your sin, and God will in judgement remember mercy.

And I therefore subjoyn this duty of repentance, next after prayer, because, if we regard iniquity in our hearts, he heareth us not, but is of purer eyes then to behold iniquity. So that if we pray without repenting hearts, we do but mock God, and deceive our selves. We cannot draw nigh to him in truth, nor will he draw nigh to us in mercy, unless we withdraw our selves from iniquity, and be at the greatest elongation from sinne that can be.

But this repentance must be universal, for all sin. (a) For one leak will sink a ship, one wound strikes Goliath dead, as well as three and twenty did Caesar; one Dalilah will do Sampson as much mischief as all the Philistines; one wheel broken disorders a whole clock; one vein's bleeding, if not stanch'd, will

Pf. 66. 18.  
Hab. 1. 13.

(a) Spencers things  
new and  
old. p. 298  
1117.

will let out the life ; one flie will spoil a whole box of ointment ; by eating one apple *Adam* lost *Paradise* ; one *Achan* was a trouble to all *Israel* ; one *Jonah*, if faulty, is a lading too heavy for one ship. So one sin causes too much injury to God, and brings too much guilt and burthen upon the conscience,

(a) *Tho:*  
*Stapletoni*  
*prompt. mo-*  
*rale.*

(b) If seven thieves enter the house, six of them being overcome, and the seventh lie lurking in some corner, the Master of that house is still in danger. If the bird, or the mouse, be held in the snare, though but by one leg, their whole body is in danger. Thus all sin, and the least sin, must be repented of.

*Exo. io26.*

*Pharaoh* would let the people go, after he had endured many plagues, so as they would leave their sheep and their cattel behind them. So *Sathan* would keep something of sin in us, which may be as a pledge of our returning to him again. And we would willingly, when we are convinced of the necessity of repentance, yet roll some sweet morsel under our tongues, and be excused in one or two of our incurable sins ; but if we will, in earnest, forsake the *Egyptian bondage* of sin, we must resolve, with *Moses*, that not a hoof shall be left behind us, but all iniquity put away out of our hands, and all our ungodly words left off, and all our wicked thoughts forsaken, and all imaginable wickedness mourned for, and by degrees relinquished. (c) As the Dove feares every feather of the Eagle, and the skin of a

(b) *Vliff.*  
*Aldrov.*  
*Ornithol. l.*

Lion stuffed with straw will make the lesser beasts to keep a distance; so all the circumstances, occasions, reliques and appearances of sin, must be bewailed, suspected, and avoided. For as a woman delivered of her child is not out of danger while the after-birth remains; so a repenting soul discovering, confessing, and forsaking some sins, is not yet safe, if there be a reserve of other sins. And while your body is yet in any strength, you should set about this necessary work of repentance, without delay. For the bitterneſſe and weight of sin must be tasted and felt one time or other; (d) so that, as a Landlord takes a greater fine of his Tenant at first, and the lesse rent afterwards : (c) Hyer. Drexelii Gymnas. fan.  
So the more time, care, and tears you spend in repentance at first, the less it will cost you to renew it afterwards. But if you still put it off, till your travel comes suddenly upon you, at best you run a great hazard, and lade your self with such a burthen, and incur your soul into such danger, from which it will be more difficult to be delivered, then from the peril it self, of child-bearing. So that if your body and soul should both miscarry, and die together, God is just, and *your blood will be on your own head*, for your former neglect of the time and space of repentance.

Ezek. 33  
4.

Besides this, which chiefly concerns your self, the consideration of the child which you carry in your womb should quicken you to repentance, as soon as you feel it quick with-  
in

in you : For, as the fancy. and longing of a woman with child doth sometimes make such strange impressions on the child in the womb, that it carries some sign thereof after its birth; And as the hurt, bruise, or fall of a woman, in that condition, makes her child sometimes imperfect, monstrous,cripled, or deformed, to the day of its death; so you should fear, lest the sin of your soul, by nature, transmit some like foul disposition, and leave some such spot on your child, as shall be a stain to his name, and a blemish to your family. Lest your corruptions prove innate qualities in him; lest you *have eaten sowre grapes, and your childrens teeth be set on edge.*

You should also take care to prevent the curse of God on your child, for your sake.

Think with your self, if God should say to me

*Gen.16. 11 as to Hagar, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and he shall be a wild man, his*

*hand will be against every man, and every mans band against him.* Would you not count your self unhappy, in being the mother of so desperate a child? Have you not also read

*Hos.9. 11, what God sayes of Ephraim, Their glory shall flee away as a bird from the birth, and from the*

*womb, and from the conception; though they bring forth children, yet I wil bereave them; they shall bring forth children to the murtherer.* The meaning is, that the judgements of God should light on their posterity in a most severe

and

and dreadful manner ; his curse should be upon them in the womb, and appear in their destruction, as soon as they were born. Inso-much that the Prophet being exceedingly troubled at the thought thereof, prays, in the next words ; *Give them, O Lord, what wilt thou give them ? give them a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts.* That is, seeing of two evils unavoidable, the least is most eligible ; let it please the Lord, if he will not remove, yet to alter, or mitigate his curse. If I may not pray for good to this people, let me intreat for a more tolerable evil. Let them therefore, O Lord, rather not conceive or bring forth, then to see them butchered and slain by their merciless enemies, or exposed to such heavy calamities as might make them to wish that they had never been, or that our wombs had been their graves. Now seeing this is threatened them for their sins, and is written for your admonition, fear, therefore, *lest God do so to you, and more also.* And for the prevention of these miseries on your unborn infants, *take with you words, and turn to the Lord, that hee may take away all iniquity, and receive you graciously.* Hof. 2. 14.

But in this practice of repentance, you must take heed and beware of the leaven of Popery ; for you need not make auricular confession to a Priest, nor seek Popish absolution from a Confessor, nor expect their injunction of some tedious or ridiculous penance, nor esteem



esteem penance a Sacrament, nor undertake a fruitless or idolatrous pilgrimage, or think to satisfie God by some good works for any sin past, nor be at cost to purchase an indulgence, or to buy a pardon from that man of sinne.

1 Joh. 1.9

Psal. 38.

13. 32. 5.

Iſa. 33. 24.

Onely be faithfull and just in confession to God, and he will be faithful to forgive. Yea, as soon as thou resolveſt in thine heart, with David, no longer to conceal thy transgressions, but to acknowledge them to God, he will forgive.

Jer. 31. 18.

Psal 85. 8.

Iſa. 32. 6.

Renew this practice as often, and with as much sorrow and contrition, as you can; and the Father of mercies will surely heare thee be-mourning thy self, & wil remember thine iniquity no more. And therefore abound' in secret

mourning, till thou hearest what God will speak, he will speak peace to his people; but let them not return again to folly. Make it, therefore, thy chief aim in repenting, to be renewed in the inner parts, to have a new heart, and anew spirit, that so all old things may passe away, and all things become new.

Ezek. 36.

26.

2 Cor. 5.

17.

Eph. 4. 24

Whereas, if you spend never so much time and strength in confession, lamentation, and supplication, and yet your heart unchanged, you will, notwithstanding, return, with the swine, to her wallowing in the mire. How many such penitents hath the Church been pestered with? many men in sickness, many women, when neer their travel, have seemed serious converts, and have uttered many penitential desires and purposes, both to God and man;

man; but when once they are delivered, they forget their obligations to God, and *suffer* Mat. 12. 45 *seven worse devils to enter.* And therefore make as sure work with your deceitful hearts as you can, by mournful confession, severe mortification, more holy conversation, &c.

(a) Communicate your zeal to others, reprove, rebuke, exhort, and warn your family, night and day, with tears, *bring forth fruit meet for repentance*, that others may see you have been with Jesus. This do, and continue doing, while you yet are upon your legs, and while you have breath in your nostrils, and then you shall

(a) Thus should good women make amends for their first offence; Eve no sooner received an ill motion, but she delivers it to Adam; so they should no sooner receive good, but they should impart it. *Bish. Hall's Contemplation, lib. 10 p. 195.*  
*find your labour not in vain in the Lord*, but a means to support you under bodily labour, *Then you shall see of the travel of your soul*, when God shall assist you in the hour of travel. Therefore, *gird up the loyns of your mind*, be intent and sedulous in this great work of making peace with God, and he will deliver you in that critical hour, and *raise you up, that you may glorifie him.* Psal. 50. 13



esteem penance a Sacrament, nor undertake a fruitless or idolatrous pilgrimage, or think to satisfie God by some good works for any sin past, nor be at cost to purchase an indulgence, or to buy a pardon from that man of sinne.

1 Joh. 1. 9

Psal. 38.

13. 32. 5.

Isa. 33. 24.

Onely be faithfull and just in confession to God, and he will be faithful to forgive. Yea, as soon as thou resolvest in thine heart, with David, no longer to conceal thy transgressions, but to acknowledge them to God, he will forgive.

Jer. 31. 18.

Psal 85. 8.

Isa. 32. 6.

Renew this practice as often, and with as much sorrow and contrition, as you can; and the Father of mercies will surely heare thee bemoaning thy self, & wil remember thine iniquity no more. And therefore abound in secret

mourning, till thou hearest what God will speak, he will speak peace to his people; but let them not return again to folly. Make it, therefore, thy chief aim in repenting, to be renewed in the inner parts, to have a new heart, and anew spirit, that so all old things may passe away, and all things become new.

Ezek. 36.

26.

2 Cor. 5.

17.

Eph. 4. 24

Whereas, if you spend never so much time and strength in confession, lamentation, and supplication, and yet your heart unchanged, you will, notwithstanding, return, with the swine, to her wallowing in the mire. How many such penitents hath the Church been pestered with? many men in sickness, many women, when neer their travel, have seemed serious converts, and have uttered many penitential desires and purposes, both to God and man;

man; but when once they are delivered, they forget their obligations to God, and *suffer* Mat. 12. 45 *seven worse devils to enter.* And therefore make as sure work with your deceitful hearts as you can, by mournful confession, severe mortification, more holy conversation, &c.

(a) Communicate your zeal to others, reprove, rebuke, exhort, and warn your family, night and day, with tears, *bring forth fruit meet for repentance*, that others may see you have been with Jesus. This do, and continue doing, while you yet are upon your legs, and while you have breath in your nostrils, and then you shall

*find your labour not in vain in the Lord*, but a means to support you under bodily labour, *Then you shall see of the travel of your soul*, when God shall assist you in the hour of travel. Therefore, *gird up the loyns of your mind*, be intent and sedulous in this great work of making peace with God, and he will deliver you in that critical hour, and raise you Psal. 50. 13 *up, that you may glorific him.*

(a) Thus should good women make amends for their first offence; Eve no sooner received an ill motion, but she delivers it to Adam; so they should no sooner receive good, but they should impart it. *Bish. Hall's Contemplation, lib. 10 p. 195.*

## C H A P. IV.

*Reading of Scriptures the duty of women  
with child.*

(a) *Qui  
vult cum  
Deo semper  
esse, semper  
debet errare  
& legere.  
Aug: de  
temp. Ser.  
3.*

**G**Od gave no small gift to the world, in giving the light of the Sun, which among visible creatures is the highest emblem of his own Essence and glory: without which the whole earth would languish, and be worse then a howling wilderness. But it was a greater, to give to our souls understanding and immortality, whereby we transcend all sublunary creatures, and are capable of communion with God and his Angels: without which we could never aspire to Heaven above, but must have been slaves to the meanest creatures upon earth. And yet it was a far richer benefit to mankind, to give us the written Word, and the greatest (next to Jesus Christ, the essential Word) which the Father of Lights could have bestowed on the world; in comparison of its greater glory, the light of the Sun hath no glory. By this our understandings are made wise, and our immortality made happy.

The Scriptures are the mysteries of Gods eternal counsel, the protraicture of those infinite perfections, that lay hidden in his breast from all eternity, the written copy of that Law  
God

God, which was originally written in the heart of *Adam*; the onely supreme rule of good and evil. They contain such knowledge as will enlarge, ravish, and transform a reachable and studious soul. *In the volumn of this book, it is written of Christ, that God of Gods, that Head of Angels, that King of Kings,* whose Incarnation is the Myserie of Mysteries, and whose work of Redemption is the summe of all Mercies. In a word, in them is an exact map of the heavenly *Canaan*, an exact delineation of the way thereunto, and a full account of the deeds and evidences of our inheritance therein.

*Psal. 40. 7*

How abominable, then, is the blasphemy of the apostate Papists, (a) who equal the Pope, or a Council, or Traditions with the Scripture, and speak dishonourably of the authority and sufficiency of the sacred Volumn? And how intolerable is that bloody crew, which will inflict the most cruel deaths on those of the Laity that procure a Bible in their vulgar tongue? (b) unwilling they are, that *their folly should be made manifest* to all men and women; knowing that ignorance is the mother of their idolatrous devotions. But, to leave controversies, let me go on, and remember those women to whom I speak, that it is their duty to read, their happiness to

D<sup>a</sup> enjoy;

(a) *B. Jewels reply to Hard. Art. 15. fol. 518.*

Doctor Jackson on the Creed, lib. 2. sect. 1. ch. 1. pag. 238. ad. 405.

*Alphonfus Casprens. de punit. heret. lib. 3. cap. 6.*

(b) *Scripta divina hereticorum fraudes conficit & furta detegit Tertul. lib. de Trin.*

Basil. by his Nurse *Matrina.*  
*Bal. cp. 74. Polycarp. and Philip- penses. Ori- gen. in Le- vit. hom. 9. August. in Psal. 33. Heron. in Coloss. 3. Chrysost. in Joh. hom. 1. & libi sapientis*  
 (a) *M. Ma. culus Spalatens. de vita per exempla religiose instit. l. 2. cap. 5. Trap. on Luk. I 51. And doubtlesse the elect Lady, to whom St. John wrot an Epistle, might as lawfully read other Scriptures as that Ep. (b) More of this nature in his Epistles to Eustochium, Salvina, Gelantia, and other Ladies,*

enjoy, and should be their delight to peruse the holy Scriptures. Certain we are, that God commanded all Parents to teach their children the words of his Law, and that accordingly Solomon was instructed by his Mother, Apollos by Priscilla, & Timothy by his Grandmother Lois. 2 Both the Greek and Latine Fathers did use, with all vehemency, to exhort their hearers to get them Bibles, and read the Scriptures at home, and to talke of them to each other, without exception of sex or age. Yea, saith a Popish writer, lest women should be thought to be excluded from the study of the Scriptures, there is a tradition that (a) the Mother of our Lord was wont to spend from the ninth hour of the day till Sun set, in reading the old Testament. He mentions also one Silvia, a noble Lady, that dedicated part of every night to reading the Bible; and of one Cecilia, a Romane Lady, who, when at home, never let her Bible goe out of her hands, when she went abroad alwayes carried it in her bosome, when she was in company alwayes made it her discourse. Thus, saith he, she lived a chaste Virgin, and died a stout Martyr, being so ravished with the sweetnesse of Christ, by daily reading something of him, that she willingly endured the bitternesse of her last torments, out of the desire she had to be with Christ. (b) Hierom likewise wishes one Lady

to whom writes to hang these jewels always at her ears; and to *Furia*, a widow, he gives this advice, to read chiefly the holy Scriptures; and after them, some learned writers, who were known to be sound in the faith. How much he abhorred the reading of idle Romances and obscene Poets is well known by other passages of his. He also relates at large the great love *Marcella*, a noble widow, had to the Scriptures, and of the Lady *Paula* (a) that she caused all her maid servants to learn frequently some portion of the *Psalms*, or other Scripture, by heart. (b) And another Ancient, giving some account of the knowledge, and piety then abounding in all Christians, sayes thus, *You may commonly see not only the teachers and rulers, but the meanest artificers, understand the principles of our Religion; and not only learned women, but also such women as live by their labour, Seamsters, maid servants &c. can reason of the Holy Trinity, and of the Creation of the world, and of the Nature of mankind, a great deal more skilfully then either Plato or Aristotle were ever able to do. Thus he. (c) And we find that wicked apostate Julian objecting it against the Christians as an absurd thing among them, that they permitted their women and children to read the Scriptures. So that we see whose followers the *Papists* are, in finding the same fault with Protestants now. And were there no other argument, this might suffice with a religious mind,*

(a) Hier.  
in Epitaph.  
*Paula*.

(b) Theodorēt de  
naturā ho-  
minis lib. 5.  
The like  
of *Gorgonia*  
sister of  
*Nazianzen*  
in his Orat.  
funebri in  
*Gorgon*.

*Cyrrill. contra*  
*Julian.*  
lib. 6. & l. 7



mind, that, as *Tertullian* said, it could not but be some great good which *Nero* condemned; so it cannot but be a singular profit to all men women, and children, to read, daily in the Book of God, seeing *Julian*, and the Pope, and all the instruments of Satan do so much oppose it. 'Tis therefore to be bewailed, that whereas in the times of former persecutions, men would travel by night many miles to one that could acquaint them with any part of the Scripture in the English tongue, and would give twenty shillings for a new Testament, and a load of Hay for the Epistle of St. James, (*the Word of the Lord being precious in those dayes*) and yet now that Bibles are cheap, and children are more generally taught to read then in former ages, yet (I say) is a lamentation, that Protestants had need be exhorted to read the Scriptures. Let me therefore conclude this point with my earnest intreaty to all readers, especially the afflicted, & women that expect that dreadfull affliction in child-bearing, to be more constant in reading the Scriptures. The Scriptures being (as) as one sayes, a shop of medicines from whence you may fetch a remedy for every malady and danger. There you may see, as I shewed you in the beginning of this book, what was the practice of pious women when barren, what when with child, what songs of thanksgiving when delivered, what course they took for the education of their children, &c. God also

hath

1 Sam. 3.

12

(as) Basil.

in Psal. 1.



hath commnaded you to search the Scriptures, and hath promised to give understanding to them that search for wisdom. If you understand not, pray to him and you shall understand. For the meek he will teach his way, and satisfy the desire of every hungry soul. (a) It cannot be (say the Fathers) that any with earnest study and diligence; reading the Scriptures should be left destitute, and for although we lack the instruction of man, yet will God himself enter into our hearts, and cast a beam of light into our minds, & open things that are hidden & become our teacher of such things as we know not. He reveals that to women and children, which he hides from the wise and prudent. (b) And as reading the Scripture angers the Papists, so it angers the Devil, and rejoices the good Angels that attend us, yea tis a delight to Christ Himself. He looks down from heaven, to see if there be any that understand, and do good, and seeke after God; and he sayes to every member of the Church, I know thy works. Tis also comfortable to you selves, 'twill give you a sight of sin that you may be humbled, and of a Saviour by whom you may be reconciled to God. Twill direct you to every good work, 'twill season your mind with holy thoughts, furnish you for every condition, that so when your time of pain approaches, you may through patience and consolation of the Scripture have hope. Onely remember to read the book of God with more reverence

John 5. 39  
Prov. 2. 4.  
5. &c.

(a) Aug. 9.  
Chrysoft.  
contra ano-  
mas, hom.  
3. and in  
Gen. hom.  
35.  
Origen. in  
Exod. hom.  
9.

b Origen.  
in Num.  
hom. 27.  
& in Josh.  
hom. 20.

Psal. 14. 2.  
Rev. 2. 2:  
ch. 9. &c.

Rom. 15.  
4.

reverence then any other book. The jewes are curious, even to superstition, in handling the Sacred volumne, and keeping it cleare, (a) *Ross* his esteeming it a prodigious mischance if any of view of all them let his Bible fall to the ground. (a) And religions the *Moscovites* touch not this Book without solemne bowing even to the ground; these things p. 482. are needlesse; but needfall it is that when we reade the Bible, we cōpose our hearts to an awfull and attentive frame, remembring that our maker, and preserver, and redeemer, doth then acquaint us with the Law by which we must live here, and by which we shall be judged hereafter; therefore lift up a prayer to him, as Prov. 2. 3. 4. 5. *Pfal.* 119. *David* often doth, for more quick understanding, and a more obedient heart; and do not huddle it over as a taske, and then lay it aside as a burthen, but chew upon it as thy food, yea charge it upon thy memory, and repeat and (b) digest it often in thy meditation, that (b) *Perkins* cas. of it may at last take hold of they heart and consc. lib. 2. work in thee that which is well pleasing in the sight of God. But of meditation I shall now c. 7. p. 71. speak in the next place.

## CHAP. V.

*Meditation the duty of women with child.*

**I**T cannot be, but women with child, when they begin to grow big and unweldy, must be taken off from such manual employments in which they were busied before, and must allow themselves some rest and retirement; therefore they should labour to make a good use of that time they have for prayer, and reading, and meditation, &c. *Meditation being then most in season when other things are out of season; and hath herein the advantage of other duties, that it requires onely the inner to be employed therein. Idlenesse is alway dangerous, especially the idlenesse of our minds. If the Devil find the soul idle, hee'll soon employ it.* And therefore were it onely to prevent the incursion of sinfull and troublesome thoughts in our solitary seasons; and also, as one sayes (a) lest our spirits like millstones, wanting grist, grate themselves with vexation, feares, discontents, and waste themselves in a fruitless endless melancholy; I say, were it only to avoid this grand inconvenience, it were safest to have alway some choise head or other of pious, profitable matter, to busie our heads and hearts about. Nothing being more known among Christians then the precepts and pre-

sidents

(a) Bolton. Gen. dir. p 71.

sidents of this kind in Scripture. Nothing more frequent in the writings and Sermons of Divines. Therefore I shall not meddle with the duty in general, but as it properly concerns women with child.

And for the better direction of those who are willing to make use of the help offered them, I shall present them with thirteen Meditations, which they may enlarge upon at their pleasure: not doubting but that divers of them are able to adde many others, as pertinent and profitable as these.

### MEDITATION I.

(A) The Rabbines have a notion, that there are four special Keyes, which the Lord reserveth in his own power. 1. *The Key of Rain.* 2. *The Key of Food.* 3. *The Key of the Grave.* 4. *The Key of the Heart.* To which may be added, *the Key of the Womb.* God hath opened my womb; oh that my heart were opened also. Nature hath locked it against God, and my customary sins have caused me, instead of opening when Christ knocketh, to adde more bolts to keep him out. But oh, that he *who hath the key of David, who openeth, and none can shut,* would break open, or *lift up the everlasting gates of my soul, that the King of glory might come in, and sup with me.* Then should I have more cause than yet I have, to rejoyce in him, for opening my womb,

7. Plan-  
avit. Flo-  
rit. Rabbi-  
nicum.

Deut. 27.  
12. Ps. 104.  
28. 1 Sam.  
2. 6. Acts  
16. 4.

Gen. 30.  
23.

Rev. 3 7.

womb, and opening to me the treasures of raine and food; yea, then I should not care how soon a grave were opened for my body, if my heart were first opened by the grace of Christ.

## MEDITATION 2.

There is a different generation and conception. The children of *Adam* are generally propagated by ordinary generation; but *Sampson*, *Jephthah*, &c. had wonders accompanying their conception. The elect of God, who are in due time regenerate, are supernaturally born and conceived, *not of flesh and blood, but of the Will of God*. Jesus Christ, as *Joh. 1. 19* to his humane nature, was not begotten, but miraculously conceived in the womb of the Virgin; as to his Divine nature, he was not conceived, but eternally begotten by the God and Father of all things. Though I am not like to be the Mother of a Prophet, or a Judge in *Israel*, though I have no miraculous or supernatural conception, but am with child, through Gods blessing, by my husband, in a state of matrimony, yet I hope, desire, and pray, that God would prepare some singular blessing for the fruit of my womb. Oh that it might, as was *Saint John*, be sanctified from the womb, and be filled with the holy Ghost, that we may have joy and gladness, and many may rejoice at its birth. Oh that it might

Luke 1.  
14, 15.  
please

Luk 1.30  
Lu. 11.27

please God so to bleis this unborn child, that it may grow *and wax strong in the Spirit*, and may become so eminent in holiness of life, that others may say, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck.*

### MEDITATION 3.

Luk. 1.36.

*And this is the sixth moneth with her who was called barren.* It is most probable, she was called, by way of reproach, *the barren wife*; and therefore not much set by, but rather vilified by the mothers in *Israel*. God hath restrained the wombs of some from bearing, but hath made mine fruitful. Whether the barrenesse of some good women, which I know, be to them a curse, I know not; but, oh my soul, how great a curse is spiritual barrenesse! and how cursed a creature do I then deserve to be! I am *wise to doe evil* (though none teach me; or tempt) *but to doe good I have no knowledge.* I have strong affections to love my friends, self, &c. to hate my enemies, and to be vext at worldly crosses, and fear temporal dangers; but how weak is my love to God, hatred of sin, and fear of his all-seeing eye! I have done many things for my credit, profit, health, ease, &c. but how

Jer. 4. 22. *barren am I, and unfruitfull in the work of the Lord*, and how little affected with the concernments of my soul! I have plenty of words for carnall company, and can, without study

Pet. 1. 3. or

or help, vent my passions with much fluency and readinesse, if my servants or inferiours displease me; but the Lord knows, and my soul is confounded to remember, that when fit occasion and opportunity have been offered, yea, a necessity laid upon me, of reproving or admonishing my relations or acquaintance, of inciting and quickning my family to true godliness, I have, many a time, said little or nothing, I have quenched the fire of zeal that burned within me; I have by my needless silence seemed to own what my soul abhors; yea, when I have purposed and resolved to speak with serious earnestness in Gods behalf, my heart hath been barren of fit matter, my tongue hath wanted words, and I have stood mute and silent, as if possessed with a dumb devil. Now, whence is this? If I be married to Christ, and implanted into him, *why is it thus? surely I am not streightned in him, but in my self.* Wherefore, oh my soul, go to him who onely worketh both to will and to doe of his own good pleasure. And never cease importuning him, till he quicken me by his Spirit, and cause me know and enjoy the vertues and powers of my Saviour. Then shall I bring forth my fruits unto holinesse, and my end shall be everlasting life.

Mic. 2.7.

Rom 6.22.

## MEDITATION 4.

*I Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled* Job 10.10



miseret  
 etq; etiam  
 under affi-  
 mantem  
 quam fir-  
 rivola a.  
 tantum  
 superbiss.  
 horis origo.  
 Plin. nat.  
 hist. l. 7. c.  
 7.

*curled me like cheese?* The child in my womb  
 is made of the like substance as I was. And  
 though I now have growth, strength, beauty,  
 or comeliness, yet I was once imperfect  
 enough, when I was newly begotten of man,  
 and conceived in the womans womb. Alas,  
 how vile are those materials of which my bo-  
 dy was made? Scripture draws a veil of mo-  
 dest and metaphorical expressions over this  
 unsightly act of generation. And when I  
 consider, oh my soul, the poor original of my  
 body, *Alas, what preheminece have I herein*  
*above a beast?* what cause to abhorre all  
 thoughts of pride, and to walk humbly all my  
 dayes? If the Peacock let fall his plumes,  
 when he beholds his black feet, have not  
 cause to be cast down with a less esteem of my  
 self, when I consider my *vile body*? In no  
 thing more vile, then in its first coagulation of  
 ignoble matter.

Phil. 3. 21.

### MEDITATION 3.

Job 10. 11

*Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,*  
*thou hast fenced me with bones and sinews.*  
 Though, in regard of the matter and manner  
 of my generation, my body is no better then  
 a bag of flegm, a lump of blood, a moistened  
 clod of earth; yet when I raise my mind to  
 the work of my Creator, *who fashioned me*  
*round about, covered me in my mothers womb,*  
*and formed me in the lowest parts of the earth,* I  
 have

have then no cause to say to my Father, what hast thou begotten, or to my Creator, why hast thou made me thus. If I may, in every creature, see some prints and footsteps of the wisdom, power, and goodnesse of God, in their formation, production, and conservation of their kind, in a continual succession for the use of man; how much more cause have I to search out this work of God; in which there is as much of excellency, curiosity, and exactnesse of skill, as in all the creation besides. Much is said by Philosophers, Physicians, Anatomists, &c. concerning this great secret of Nature, the Child in the Womb. They speak, with much probability and rational conjecture, of the manner and matter of generation & conceptions, of the very day when the womb, by its natural heat, begins to operate towards it, & when it receives its first change into a fleshy substance; what day the brain, heart and liver, begin to be distinguished, and when it receives a humane shape in other parts, though the whole be no bigger then a small flie. Also how it is nourished, and in what place and posture it lies, if male, and in what, if female. What day it receives, by the gift of God, a living soul, and when it begins to stir and calcitate in the womb, &c. But the further I dive and search into this matter, the more I am at a loss; still new questions do arise, which I cannot resolve. Even this knowledge is too  
 wonderfull for me. Solomon hath put a question,

Eccles. 11. 5

Psal. 139.

14, 15, 16,

17.

on, which I think himself could hardly answer; Knowest thou how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child? Therefore, oh my soul, let me sing that song of David, and, if possible, with Davids heart. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them: How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the summe of them? But I must not, I cannot, here leave off this delightful Meditation, but must again praise the Lord, for that he hath not executed the curse of Adam, to the uttermost, upon us. Though sin hath robbed us of many most desirable perfections, yet there is that left, with which, and for which we may glorifie God. If we survey the frame and building of this earthly tabernacle, we shall find that rare fitness of every part, and that symmetry of the whole, that we cannot but say, *its builder and maker is God*. What shall I say of the several members and particles of our bodies, of the scituation of the more noble parts, and subordination of the rest, of the influences of the higher parts on those that are less noble, of the ma-

ny

ny channels of conveyance, whereby the inner parts transmit bloud, strength and spirits, to the exterior and most remote. What of the beauty, strength, tenderness, majesty, and singular faculties of some parts; of the contiguities and artificial connexion of all parts; what of the sagacity of the five senses, the mixture of the four elements, the correspondence our bodies have with all creatures, the resemblance of the three regions, yea, of the three heavens, &c. For which causes, Man is called a *little world, the measure of all things, the pattern of the Universe, the miracle of miracles, &c.* Yea, mans body is, yet, in regard of its majesty, strength beauty, and noble faculties of its several parts, in some measure, (a) *2 Chr.* after the image of God, (a) And God himself *16. 9.* is pleased to represent his perfections and operations by several parts of the body of man. If *Dan. 9. 18.* therefore, the serious prying into any one *Psal. 34. 16.* part take up the time and study of the learned, *Job. 40. 9.* inasmuch that *Psal. 74. 3.* *Isa. 49. 16.* *&c.* *Galen* was turned from Atheism &c. in studying the secrets of mans body, and presently praised and acknowledged our Creator; then, oh my soul, let that which made him a Christian, make me a more thankful Christian; that I may more zealously glorifie God with my body, and may hereafter have all its primitive perfections restored at the Resurrection, *when God shall raise it in honour and incorruption, and make it like the glorious body of Jesus Christ.*

## MEDITATION 6.

Anatomists themselves are utterly to seek, what reason to give for the opening and shutting of the womb. But though I know not the natural causes hereof, yet I find by the effects, that the child is quick within me. And oh that I could say with like certainty, that though I *know not the way of the Spirit*, or how grace comes in, and sin goes out, how Christ enters, and Satan is dispossessed, yet I feel by the effects, that whereas *I* did once conceive and bring forth sin, yet now grace conceives holy motions, and brings forth religious actions; that whereas my heart was a *cage of unclean spirits*, and barren of goodness, yet now *Christ is formed within me*; now I feel, by happy effects, that grace is quick within me, and quickens me to every good work; *Wherefore blesse the Lord, oh my soul; and all that is within me blesse his holy name. For he that is mighty, hath done to me great things, and holy is his name. And whence is this to me, that the grace of Christ should come to me?*

*Psal. 103. i.*

*Luk. i. 43.*  
49.

## MEDITATION 7.

*Gen. 25.*  
22, 23.

*Rebecca conceived, and the children struggled within her, and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? that is, if I am heard of God in my request,*

quest, and am with child by his blessing; whence is this struggling, this painful conflict, and strange uneasiness of the fruit of my womb? *And she went to enquire of the Lord, and the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, &c.* So, when I look into my self, and observe the commotions that are in the womb of my heart, I conclude, Surely there are two nations within me; *the flesh*, with all its motions, *lusting against the spirit* and its grace; and the Spirit with its gracious influences, alway striving against the sinfulness of my carnal part. Gal. 5.17.

Now blessed be God, that seeing sin will yet keep possession, that it hath no quiet abode within me, but meets with reluctancy and opposition from my spirituall part. But *oh wretched creature that I am*, how often is evil present and prevalent with me, how many are those pangs of sorrow, those sighs and groans that my mischievous and restless corruptions cause within me?

But if it be so, that the power of the most High hath overshadowed me, and true grace be implanted in my soule, then I shall seek to the Lord, that he would cause the better part in me to be the more prevailing part; that he would water and give increase to these tender beginnings, and give me at last a safe and happy deliverance from *this body of death*.

## MEDITATION 8.

Exod. 21.  
22, 23. *If men strive and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow, he shall be surely punished, &c.* Women with child are liable to many dangers. A fall, a bruise, an accidentall stroke, a fright, a strain, the taking somewhat that proves expulsive, or the disappointment of somewhat they longed for; these and such other contingencies are noxious to them, and often-times cause abortion, or the mischance of her fruit departing from her. Such was the case of the Church, when it was with child with many Converts, the great red Dragon watched the destruction of her, and of her fruit.

Rev. 12.2,  
3.

Isa. 32. 9,  
10, 11. *And thus is with every repenting soul. What security soever there be among those careless women that are at ease; how little inward care or sorrow they feel, while they forget God; how unacquainted soever with the hurt and smart of sin, or Satans striving with them, before they are acquainted with God: yet, no sooner do they espouse themselves to Christ, and conceive purposes of holy living, and begin to be fruitful in any grace, but they shall have many adversaries in the world, and especially the god of this world, striving against them; to fright them, to tempt them to receive such principles, company, suggestions,*



as may quench their graces; or to deprive them of that Spiritual food they long for, or to intice them to straine their consciences, or some way or other to cause them to fall; that they may be wounded, bruised &c. and the fruit of grace depart from them. But oh my soul, hath God such care of the unborn infant as to provide a speciall law in its behalfe; and will he not much more take care of that grace which he hath begotten in my Soul? Oh my God, keep me that the Evill One touch me not.

### MEDITATION 9.

*In sorrow shalt thou bring forth Children.* Gen 3:16  
 As the first general curse, *In dying thou shalt dy*, brought not onely the pains of death, but intended also all the miseries of our life; so this particular curse upon women, brings not onely pain in travel, but comprehends all the infirmities of Child-bearing. I find that the child in my womb brings many weakneses and aches upon me; but oh how sad and deplorable are those deeper sicknesses and maladies, which I have brought upon it? Its body partaking of my substance, partakes unavoidably of my natural pollution. *Its Soul*, though it come immediately from *the Father of Spirits*, yet (*I know not how*) is upon its infusion into this tender infant, subjected to the common misery of the Children of *Adam*; who having lost the image and likenesse of God, sinne and

E 3

corruption

Psal. 58. 3.  
Is. 48. 8.

corruption must needs follow. I am an  
unclean vessel, and how can any clean thing  
come out of me? Oh my soul, what need have  
I to be sanctified throughout both in Body and  
Soul, and Spirit. And, Oh my God, repair by  
thy grace, what sin hath made so defective in  
me and mine.

### MEDITATION 10.

Mat. 24. 19.  
Lu. 23. 29.

Our blessed Saviour and Great Prophet Je-  
sus Christ, foretelling the miseries that should  
shortly come on *Judea & Jerusalem*, sayes, *Wo*  
*unto them that are with Child, and to them that*  
*give suck in those days.* And in another Evan-  
gelist: *Behold the dayes are coming in the which*  
*they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the*  
*wombs that never bare, and the paps that never*  
*gave suck.* And indeed of all persons, none  
more miserable in the time of War than wo-  
men with child, or women that give suck; be-  
cause their care is double, and their persons  
uncapable of flying and shifting for their  
lives, as those who are single may and do. And  
of all murders none more horrible in all its  
circumstances, *then to rip up women with child.*  
Wherefore, oh my soul, let me be thankfull  
to my God, that there is peace in our borders,  
and any quietness and safety in my habitation,  
and that I am free from those terrours and af-  
frights, with which many others in a time of  
common calamity are undone. Oh how many

Wo-

2 Kin. 8. 12.  
Lam. 5. 11.

Women, with their unborn infants, have been butchered in many places in ages past, and martyred by blood-thirsty Papists in these later ages, of which histories are too plentiful! And if there be now any in my condition, in any place, especially among Christians, that is exposed daily to the rage of a devouring Sword; the Lord be pleased either to *restrain the Enemy and the Avenger*, or to *avenge the cause of the murdered*, that (according to thy own Law) they may not go unpunished but may *give life for life*. Yea, *Lord hear the cry of the oppressed and give their adversaries blood to drink; for they are worthy*.

Psal. 8. 2.

Rev. 6. 10.

## MEDITATION II.

*My little children, of whom I travel in birth again till Christ be formed within you.* Where any place is blest with a painfull Minister and Pastour after Gods own heart, they have in them much of the Apostle's temper. For, when I consider their painfull studies, their sighes and teares, their spending their spirits in ardent Prayers, and laborious Preaching; their compassionate exhortations, & passionate supplications; and their *giving themselves wholly to these things*; I conclude, that surely they have many agonies and conflicts in their hearts for us. Wherefore, Oh my soul, while I carefully expect the hour of my own travell, how much am I to blame, that I so little, so seldom,

Gal. 4. 19.

1 Tim. 4.

15.

Coloss. 2. 1.

Eccl. 12.11

or never, consider the travell of my Ministers soul? often have I been pricked in conscience by *his goad and nails*, often wounded by the *sword of the Spirit*, bruised and smitten down by the *hammer of the word*; and surely his stimulating reproofs, his keen admonitions, and knocking terrours, proceeded from his longing desire of my conversion. But when he hath, after long striving, been in hopes of my returne, how have I, by relapses, and fresh miscarriages, *vext his righteous soul*, and quencht his new conceived hopes of me? yea like those inconstant *Galatians*, I have caused him again and again to travell with me in birth. How just were it with God to plague me with a tedious, painfull, and fruitlesse travell? and to make me read my sin, and feel its bitterneffe, in so suceable a punishment? But, Oh my God, remit the evils I have committed, work in me what thou hast required, and compleat in me what thy grace hath begun. Let not the guide of my soul labour in vain, but let him see of the travell of his soul; and let me be among those children, of whom my pious teacher shall hereafter say, *Lord here am I, and the children which thou hast given me!* Then also shall I with more confidence expect to have benefit by his prayers for me, when my body is in travell, if God shall thus blesse and answer him, in his prayers and travell for the new birth of my soul.

MEDITA-

## MEDITATION 12.

I find it frequent in Scripture, that the most dreadful judgements on the wicked are thus exprest, *that Anguish shall take hold of them as of a woman in travel, and that sudden destruction shall come upon them as upon a woman in travel, and they shall not escape.* Wherefore, oh my soul, as *Abraham* when he had promise of a child, did presently intercede (as far as he durst) in behalf of wicked *Sodom*; so let me ever remember, to pray for the worst of men, though perhaps they scorn and despise me and my Prayers. Oh my God, *deale not with them after their sins; but cause the wickednesse of the wicked to come to an end, that the wicked themselves may not come to a sad end. So persecute them with thy tempest & make them afraid with thy storm that they may seeke thy face Oh Lord.* And in whatever place or nation thy judgments shall enter, yet if there be but a few righteous persons among them, spare them from totall destruction, and let not thy wrath come upon them to the uttermost.

Psal. 48. 6.  
Isa. 23. 4.  
Jer. 48. 41  
C. 49. 42  
C. 50. 43

Gen. 18.  
14. 22.

Psal. 7. 9

Psal. 83. 15

## MEDITATION 13.

I find also that the sorrows of the people of God, when God seemes to forsake them, the calamities of the church when God is pleased to correct them, and the miserable disappointment

John. 16  
21. 22.  
Jer. 6. 24  
C. 22. 23.  
C. 30. 6.  
IIa. 26. 17  
18. C. 37. 3

ment of a Church hoping for reformation, and endeavouring in vain for a deliverance from idolatry and oppression, are also expressed by the pain and misery of women in travell. Now, Oh my soul, how can I but observe two things from hence?

1 Sam. 4.  
19, 20, 21.

The one is, that 'tis surely the will of God, that I should not confine my care to the concerns of my private condition, but should labour for a publick Spirit; such as was in that good woman, the wife of Phinehas, who was with child and near to be delivered, and when she heard the tidings that the Ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed her selfe and travelled; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death, the women that stood by her said, fear not, for thou hast born a son, but she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, the glory is departed from Israel, because the Ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, the glory is departed from Israel, for the Ark of God is taken. Blessed woman, worthy of everlasting fame and imitation! She took no comfort in her deliverance though she had a son, while the Church of God was not delivered. Oh that the same mind might be in me, that I might learn also to be more affected with the affairs of the Church! That, if women may not be common actors of publick affairs, yet we may be specially



*ciall mourners for publick miseries.* Alas,  
 what is my danger to the universall danger,  
 my travell to the travell of the Church? what  
 comfort to me to have many children, except  
 I might see the good of Gods chosen? what con- Psal. 106. 5  
 tent have I in being delivered from my pains,  
 unlesse God deliver Israel from all its troubles? Psal. 37.  
 what delight had Abraham in all his mercies, 40.  
 while he went childlesse, or I in all my children  
 if the children of God be comfortlesse? Oh  
 my God, blesse me out of Zion, and thus let me be Psal. 128:  
 blessed as those are that feare the Lord; let me 3, 4, 5, 6.  
 not onely be a fruitfull vine, but let me see the  
 good of Jerusalem all my dayes; Let me not onely  
 see my childrens children, but peace upon Israel.

But from the manner of holy Writ to com-  
 pare almost all miseries, whether inward or  
 outward, whether of good men, or of bad, to  
 the pains of women in travell, as the fittest  
 embleme of extreme conflicts and agonies, I  
 must needs conclude, that there is no sorrow  
 like unto that sorrow, and no evill like that sin  
 that caused it; no danger like that danger,  
 and therefore no Saviour like him who can  
 deliver from it. Wherefore, while my life  
 hangs in suspense, my soul is distracted be-  
 tween fear and hope, my mind is appall'd,  
 my heart melts, and is even faint, when I  
 consider that hour of torment approaching.  
 Let me yet further inquire, Oh my soul, what  
 duties are yet behind, in order to making my  
 peace with God, and let nothing hinder or  
 divert



divert my present religious and heavenly employment, till I have brought my mind into some settled posture, ready to abide whatever shall happen.

So much for the duty of Meditation, now to the rest.

## CHAP. VI.

*Resignation to the will of God, the duty of Women with child.*

Mark. 10.  
15.

**T**O submit and resign our wills to the will of God in all things, is a most desirable and comfortable temper in any man or woman. It is indeed the sum of most duties, and a compendium of many virtues. He that can *thus receive the Kingdom of God as a little child*, with Selfe denyal and humble dependence on our Father in heaven, he shall in time, by thus subjecting himself to the Divine will in doing or suffering, grow very like the Angels and Saints in heaven, and shall himself enjoy that tranquillity and undisturbed serenity, as will be a kind of heaven upon earth. The truth whereof will especially appear in this particular case of suffering any dangerous and painfull afflictions. There was nothing more commendable in old *Eli*, than that pious sentence of his when he heard of the ruine of his house, *It is the Lord, let him do what*

1 Sam. 3.  
18.

*what seemeth him good.* There was never more grace expressed in fewer words, than in those of our Saviour's, *not my will but thine be done.* Considering, that his pangs, agonies, and torments, were a thousand times greater, than the pains of a woman in travell, yea equall (in substance) to the pains of hell. Wherefore be not sollicitous overmuch for your bodily life, or the life of your child; much lesse should you be too eager in desiring one of such a sex: as some will wish for a Boy, others for a Girle; and that with strange discontent at the very thoughts of being disappointed. But the example of *Rachel* may be a warning to you all. She made account to die with melancholy and sorrow, *if she had not children;* and she had her desire but it cost her, her life: As you may do well to reade in the story it selfe. So what she longed for, she perished by. Tis reported of *Agrippina*, *Nero's* Mother, that she prayed, her son might be Emperour. The oracle told her, that if he came to be Emperour, he would kill his Mother; she replied desperately, let him kill me, so I may but see him Emperour first. And the event proved accordingly, *for he caused her to be ript up,* that he might see the inside of that womb wherein he first lay. I have read also of a woman that took on excessively, for her child that was like to die; and the Minister telling her that she did very unwisely, for perhaps the child, if it lived, might prove so great

Luke 22.  
4.  
Mar. 26. 42

Gen. 30. 1  
c. 35. 16,  
17, 18.

*Occidat.  
modo im-  
peret. Suc-  
con.*

' great a crosse to her, that she might have  
 ' cause once to wish, that he had now died.  
 ' She madly answered, that so her child might  
 ' live, she did not care though he should here-  
 ' after come to Hanging. Accordingly he did  
 ' live, and was in time for robbery or murther  
 ' *hanged indeed.* This folly would have seem'd  
 ridiculous to some heathens, who knew not  
 the will and wisdom of God, so clearly as we  
 may. *Plutarch* relates of *Cleobis* and *Biton*,  
 ' that, in the absence of the horses, they drew  
 ' their Mother's Chariot to the temple them-  
 ' selves; for which obedient Act of theirs,  
 ' she prayed, that they might be rewarded with  
 ' the greatest blessings that could possibly hap-  
 ' pen from God to Man: but so it happened  
 ' that they were *both found dead in their beds*  
 ' *next morning.* News being brought to their  
 ' Mother of this supposed misfortune, she re-  
 ' plied, *I will never account my selfe unfortu-*  
 ' *nate, in being mother to such sons whom God*  
 ' *bath invested with immortality for their pious*  
 ' *and obedient actions.* If a pagan woman had  
 so good an esteem of the providence of an  
 unknowen God, how inexcusable are you, if by a  
 heart of unbelief or self-love, you depart from  
 him in your faith, or prescribe to him in your  
 prayers? How dishonourable to his wisdom,  
 and dangerous to your selves, is passionate im-  
 portunity for any temporall blessing? Tis  
 lawfull, *I confesse,* to pray for life, and safe de-  
 liverance (as for daily bread,) for *David,*  
*Hezekiah*

*Hezekiah*, yea Christ himselfe did thus petition the Author of life; It being naturall to every living creature to desire the continuati-  
 on of its own Being. But we must moderate our desires herein, with expresse reference to Gods good Will; Yea, with that holy indifferency, as to be pleased without that gift which it shall not please God to bestow. (a) Seeing (as one sayes) there is a necessity of yielding to Gods Will because it cannot be resisted, and there is equity in so doing, because it cannot be better'd. Wherefore when blind nature which cannot see beyond mortality (at least, not see far into immortality) shall fill you with earnest desires of longer life; yet let the reverence you owe to the gracious Providence and infallible Word of God (of which I shall say more in the following Chapters) cause you to yeild to his blessed Will. Cast up all events, consider what may happen, and resolve, as David did, *If I shall finde favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and shew me both the ark and his habitation: but if he thus say, Behold I have no delight in thee, behold here am I let him do to me what seemeth good unto him.* Say with them in the Acts, *the will of the Lord be done.* Say with that good woman (I have somewhere read of) who being asked in her sicknesse, whether, if God should referre it to her to live or dye, which she would chuse; *I would choose neither but ee'n referre it to him again.* If God call for the life

English  
 Annot. on  
 Gen. 35 18

(a) Doct.  
 Gorge on  
 the L rds  
 prayer. p.  
 94.

2 Sam 15.  
 25, 26.

Acts 21. 14

life of your child, yield it up as quietly as *Abraham* did *Isaac*. If he shall call for the life both of you and your child, let your heart be ready to answer, *Lord, here am I, and the child which thou hast given me.*

---

## C H A P. VII.

*Dedication of the child to God, the duty of women with child.*

**W**Hen, I say, it is your duty to dedicate your child to God before it is born, I do not mean a dedication to some office in the house of God, as *Hannah* did by *Samuel*, (for I suppose she did it by some propheticall instinct equivalent to a Revelation.) But yet this I must needs say, in short, That it were, in my judgement, a commendable purpose in any parents, poor or rich, that, if their child prove hopefull and ingenious, he shall be wholly set apart for the service of God in his Church. It being so known a practice among Heathens, Jewes, and ancient Christians, if they had any thing of singular worth, to dedicate it to God. And our Gentry and Nobility are herein guilty of a most irreligious and ignoble practice; I mean, to count their son and heir, or any of their children, that are well shaped, and towards, above the office of the Ministry; as if it would

would be a perpetual dishonour to their family, to set him a-part for God: But, if there be any of their children mis-shapen, make him a Scholar, and, if he be a Dunce, use their interest to get him some preferment, that requires no employment. Surely, the first author of the Priesthood, God himself, appointed it to the first-born, as his peculiar honour above the rest of his brethren, and, for special provocations against God, they lost it, and it was conferred, by divine favour, on Levi. And how plentiful are Histories of the ancient practices of many Nations, especially the Romans, in appropriating the office of chief Priest to their Kings and Emperours, as an honour not befitting any meaner person. Yea, among Christians, the Prince of Anhalt, and other persons of honour, have ambitiously accepted, and happily performed, the Ministerial Office. And no doubt, but one reason why the Ministry is of no higher esteem, is, because divers selfish needy persons seek the Priesthood meerly for maintenance; and so are tempted, by their indigency, to unsuitable courses, and dishonourable shifts; and are incapable of being so beneficent as they would, or should be; and also are the less regarded, because extracted from the meanest of the people. And, no doubt, this is one reason, why the Nobility and Gentry are more feared then loved, more envied then esteemed, because they mind their own honour, but not at all the honour of God; they love their ease, their pomp, their lusts, and excess of riot; but

as for the tranquillity or utility of the Church, they are meer Gallio's. First it is with God, that they should be of mean parts, and illiterate Ignoramusses (as many of them are) seeing if they had either parts or learning they would scorn to employ them for the service of God in his Church. Therefore, till I can bear or imagine any reason to the contrary, I shall here propose it as a thing commendable in any person of quality, be they never so great, to entertain such thoughts in their minds, of devoting their child to God, as did Hannah. And I doubt not, but if any of them, who are less mancipated to the common follies, would cease a while to idolize themselves, and suffer reason and conscience to speak, they would consider better of it. But this I speak not by commandement, And therefore it is not a Precept, but a counsel.

2 Cor. 8. 8.

Judg. 13. 5

Much less should any be so far besotted with Popish perswasions, or Jesuitical delusions, as to think a child not dedicated to the Lord, unless it be dedicated to a Monastick life. Though Sampson, while yet in the womb, was appointed to be a Nazarite, yet not by his parents choice, but by the command of the Angel. Therefore let them onely take such a course, as have the like warrant.

Well then, by dedicating it to God, I mean, that which is the indispensable duty of all Christian parents, viz. partly in purposing, while the child is yet in the womb, that if it safely enter into the land of the living, and come



to years of maturity, they will use all possible endeavors that it may be the Lords, by *bringing it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; partly by serious prayers to God in its behalf, that it may be separated to him from the womb. Thus, I say, should every mother beg of God, that, as it is mine by nature, so it may be thine by grace; that as I have received from thee, so thou wouldst be pleased to accept my dedication of it to thee again. Some women have such prayers and purposes, when their travel fills them with pain; and threatens them with danger; but, if once delivered, they mind them no more. Wherefore, let your duty herein take an earlier date, that it may make better impression in your heart. And assure your self, if you thus purpose and desire that your child may be set apart for God, and become holy to the Lord, it shall be with you as with *David*; he dedicated much for the Temple, and purposed to build an house for God; though he lived not to accomplish his desire, yet he lived in his son, and was blessed with a *Solomon*, who did afterwards happily accomplish it: so, I say, Whether you live or not, yet because it is in your heart, as soon as ever the child was in your womb, to devote it to the Lord; this is, doubtless, *thankworthy with him*: you shall be blessed in your posterity, and *your prayers shall return into your own bosome*. For either your child shall live long in the land, and enjoy the fruit of

Eph. 6. 3.

2 Sam. 7.  
12, 13, 14,  
15.

Ps. 35. 13.

your early prayers, or enter with you into Heaven, where you shall enjoy him in glory for ever, having your joy herewith augmented, that God took him so soon.

---

## CHAP. VIII.

*Care of her own health, the duty of a woman with child.*

**T**Hough care of the body may seem to be a matter of so small moment, as scarce to deserve a chapter by it self; yet the truth is, it is a duty of so great concernment, that it must not be excluded, but distinctly considered by child-bearing women. Certain we are, that life and health must be reckoned among those talents which God doth intrust them with. Because the health of the body contributes much to perfect all operations of the mind: but women with child have a far greater reason to be mindful of their health, viz. not only for their own sakes, but the good of the infant that is yet unborn. If therefore some grave Authors have thought it necessary, that the Father himself should observe divers rules of temperance, both in body and mind, if he expect towardly and comely children; How much more requisite is it, that the mother, who contributes far more  
to

*Charon of  
Wisdom.*

*Magirus  
Physi.*

to the body and disposition of the child, then the Father (because the child, for many months, receives such nourishment as the womb, where it lies, affords; I say, how much more doth it concern her) to use all possible caution and discretion, to keep her self in a healthy and well-ordered plight, that she may afford the better nutriment to the fruit of her womb.

I question not, but their care herein is as effectual to the strength of their child, as the warmth of the Sun and enriching the soil is to any fruit. And as fruit that ripens kindly is gathered the easier, and comes off without tearing the branch on which it grows; so the child, the more strength it receives from the mother, as the root, and the more vigorous it grows by all additional helps, the easier and speedier will its passage into the world be.

This is one reason (say Expositors) if not the chief reason, why the Angel layes so strict a charge upon the wife of *Manoah*, when she was with child with *Sampson*, to *abstain from wine and strong drink*, because he was to be a Nazarite, and therefore must not have his temper and constitution infected with a natural liking to that, which he was prohibited the use of. By which you may perceive, what influence the meat, drink, desires, and delights of the mother, have upon the future disposition of the child. Wherefore learn it as a special duty to forbear

Dr. Gouge  
of Domest.  
Duties, p.  
516:

all excess in meats and drinks, use no violent recreations, take no needless journies, incumber not your body with much labour, nor your mind with much anxious care, sorrow and trouble. Give not way to immoderate passion, the vehemency whereof may much distemper and endanger you in that condition. For if by these or any other follies, there happen a mischance, or the death of both the mother and the child unborn (as too often it hath happened) surely the blood of the child shall be required at their hands, & their own blood also shall be upon their own heads. Now judge, how much guilt and danger lies upon careless & wanton women (who will not observe that moderation and prudential care their condition calls for; I say, how much sin and misery lies upon them) if they perish by their own negligence and heedless irregularity. Of all sins, none more crying then Murther; of all murthers, none more desperate then Self-murther; and of all self-murthers, none more detestable then to murther her self and child at once: & this, I say, they are inexcusably guilty of, who by any of the courses above-mentioned, or any other course, do hasten their own death, and render the birth of their child difficult or impossible.

Hos. 4. 2.  
Psal. 9. 12.  
Jer. 26. 15  
Ps. 51. 14.

## CHAP. IX.

*Preparation for death, the duty of those women with child, who never yet repented.*

**T**Hat this must not be delayed, I have already shewed in the Epistle to the Reader, I shall now shew you how it must be performed (not to insist largely upon this common Theme, which every Funeral Sermon and devotional Treatise do present us with) considering very briefly the heads of such principal duties as may not safely be omitted by them that would be at any certainty concerning their future estate. If you be unconverted, and have lived in pleasure, been ignorant, careless and impenitent; then consider, that it is now *high time to awake out of sleep*, *Rom. 13. 11* and to *number your days, and consider your latter end.* *Ps. 90. 12.* You have no peculiar privilege, *Deut. 32.* that can exempt you from the lot of many others. Be you never so great and rich, 29.  
strong and healthy, have you been the mother of never so many children, have you abundance of all things for your conveniency, together with the most skilful and famous Midwife; yet neither these, nor any other helps, *can deliver you from going down to the pit.*

pit. Therefore seeing it must needs be proper to expect death, let me ask you, how are you provided for immortality? What earnest have you of *any inheritance* in Heaven? If you hope that God will pardon you, and accept you; yet, what *reason* can you render of the hope that is in you? if, because he is merciful, then how have you applied your self to him for mercy? have you constantly sought him, diligently pleased him, &c? For if the righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly appear? If many who strive to enter, shall not be able, how impossible then, must salvation needs be to the negligent? In a word, if Pharisees, Hypocrites, Votaries, and those that have done many good and mighty works shall be shut out, how much more shall they be excluded, that never had either the form or power of godliness, that lived in gross ignorance and prophaneness, so that their sins are open before hand.

Well, you will say, *What shall we do to be saved, and to inherit eternal life?*

Answer, You should first look over the ten Commandments, and consider what sins are there forbidden, and what duties are there required. For, *by the law comes the knowledge of sin.* If you have some brief expositor by you, it will much help. I knew one, that when he was at the University, and had serious thoughts of his ways, took M. Bifield his 6. Treatises (a little book of small Price, but of excellent use) wherein there

there is such an enumeration of sins against the several commandments, as descends to all particulars, fit to be expressed in print, and having in several sheets of paper transcribed it, and all along inserted what particular sins he could remember (And he found that it brought many sins to his remembrance, which otherwise he had well-nigh forgotten;) set apart a day of fasting in secret on purpose, and there spread them before the Lord with mourning and with supplication, and found very much comfort therein. Now, though I prescribe not this particular course to every one; yet, I say, a serious comparing our lives with the rule of holiness, is the one thing necessary to lay a right foundation of repentance. Well, when you thus have spent some good time in searching and trying your ways, and have discovered greater and greater abominations in your heart and life; Then spend also some thoughts about the unreasonableness, unprofitableness, unthankfulness and iniquity of every sin. Consider, what wrong sin does to the honour of Gods Attributes, and of his Law. His Holiness requires nothing but what is good, his Wisdom what is fit, and his Mercy what is comely and beneficial for us. Shall we break such a Law, wherein Holiness, Wisdom, and Mercy appears? If any thing be difficult, he offers the help of his Grace, to all that bewail their weakness. And whatever his Law be, yet surely he is our Creator; and therefore, by all bonds of Reason

2 Cor. 12.  
5, 6.



Reason and Nature, we owe obedience to him, whose we are. Again, consider the injury done to Christ, by piercing him with our Sins, by despising his Blood (that onely and costly remedy) and dishonouring his Name, as if he were not sufficient to save, or as if his Grace gave liberty to Sinne. Also consider the perjury every sinner is guilty of, in violating our Baptismal engagement, and making slight account of all other renewed stipulations we have made to God since. What shall I say of the shame and mischief sin brings upon us in this life? It deprives of Gods Image, Favour, and gracious Presence, robs us of that primitive innocency & righteousness, with which the humane Nature was at first dignified above all sublunary creatures, and degrades us to a condition (in many respects) *worse then that of the beasts that perish*, yea, it makes us children of the Devil, and children of wrath: it fills the creature with vanity, under which it groans and travels in pain; it fills our life with crosses, our family with troubles, our bodies with diseases, our consciences with disquiet. Sin makes travel painful, death dreadful, and hell intolerable, so that it is a boundless and endless evil. And should not such considerations as these awaken you? May it not trouble you to consider with your self thus, If I die with all this load of sin upon me, it will surely sink me deep enough into the burning lake? And alas, if I live till the full time

Psal. 49.

12, 30.

Eccles. 3.

18.

time of my travel come (which is very uncertain) yet how little a while is it before that fatal hour may sever my soul from my body; My soul, which is invisible, and therefore lesse minded, while my vile body hath been pampered, and delicately kept; and then I must appear before an impartial Judge, whose eyes are as flames of fire; and how shall I escape or endure his sentence of condemnation, who have neglected so great salvation? Oh Eternity, that amazing word, that astonishing thing! who can number the millions of years contained in Eternity? Who can spie either bank or bottom in the Ocean of eternity? Well, if I were not certain, but had only a suspicion that my soul shall have eternal recompences, according to its works, yet why should I adventure upon sin? If there were neither Hell nor Heaven, yet sin is hateful and filthy in it self, and holiness and righteousness is most eligible and amiable for it self. So that, were I never so much an infidel, yet reason will tell me, that only piety can beget in my minde true tranquillity. But surely, my Creator is true, and therefore will, in another world, bring every work into judgement, and by rewards and punishments, vindicate, for ever, that honour of his holiness, which is so little regarded upon earth.

Heb. 2. 3.

Eccles. 12.  
14.

Having, with such things as these, brought your mind to consider of the nature and danger of your sins, endeavour, in the next place,  
to

to let your self to weeping, supplication, and fasting, (*but still as your weakness will beare, for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice, and therefore an unseasonable or intolerable measure of religious melancholly, which may endanger your body, is from the devil, that murtherer*) acknowledge your offences, and seek the face of God. And be not slight or weary in this work, but the more your heart draws back, and the sooner it would give over, as if you had now done enough, the more suspect your self, and *stir up your self* to call upon God. Do not this work by halves, but bring it to some good issue, and while your heart is in any serious temper, and conscience begins to accuse, listen to it, lest God give you over to final impenitency and unbelief, and then *seven worse devils will enter*, and you will soon be ripe for Hell. Wherefore I tell you again, you must, upon the sight of your sins, bend your knees to the Father of Mercies, flying to Christ for refuge, and laying hold upon the horns of the Altar, plead the all-sufficiency of that sacrifice that Christ offered; condemning your self again and again, and casting your selfe upon the rich and free grace of God in Jesus Christ. Resolve, with seriousness and sincerity, to live in newness of life, and to *walk, not in the flesh, but in the spirit*. And seeing of your self you can do nothing exactly and acceptably good (*yet let me tell you, by the way, you may*

Gal. 5. 16.

doe more then you doe by your own strength  
 and the help of that common assistance, God hath  
 already given you; and you may forbear many  
 sins, if you will. As appears by the different car-  
 riage of rude sinners; when they are in civil or re-  
 ligious company, they can then keep in their oaths  
 and curses, if they list: and therefore do the best  
 you may, and blame God of backwardness to  
 help you, if you can) seeing, I say, your own  
 strength will not reach so far, as to change  
 your heart and life, and bring you to be truly  
 holy; therefore improve the Covenant of  
 grace, wherein God doth promise to put a new  
 heart within us, and to cause us to walk in his  
 statutes, & beg of him daily to work in you both  
 to will and to do of his own good pleasure. If you  
 thus do, let your travel come when it will,  
 and whatever become of your body, your  
 soul cannot miscarry. If also you have  
 wronged any, by slander or unrighteous dea-  
 ling, resolve to make them speedy satisfaction.  
 If you have malice against any person or par-  
 ty whatever, lay it wholly aside. If you have  
 been wronged by any in your name, or other-  
 wise, forgive them, and so will your heavenly Fa-  
 ther forgive you. But if in any thing there hap-  
 pen a difficulty about restitution, reconcila-  
 tion, &c. which you are perplexed about;  
 take the advice of some pious and skilful Pa-  
 stor, an interpreter, one of a thousand, who may  
 shew to man his righteousness, and who may  
 guide your feet into the way of peace, and obey  
 their

Ezek. 36.  
 25, 26, 27.

Mat. 6. 14.  
 15.

Job 33.  
 23, 24.

their advice speedily, Also, if you be yet puzzled about the right performance of your secret duties, and doubt you have not taken the right way, or that any doubts oppress your mind concerning the pardon of your sinnes, then cast your eyes upon such as fear the Lord, (how much soever you despised or hated them before) such as have *mourned in secret for your pride*, and have earnestly longed for your conversion, and are themselves practitioners in religious retirements: *With them are the secrets of the Lord*. And therefore unbosom your self to them of such things as are meet to be revealed, and hearken rather to their counsel, then to the discouragements of Satan; and get them to entertain you into their company, and to remember you in their ordinary and daily prayers, or in some more solemn address to God in your behalf. And it is much to be hoped, that the interest of these favourites in the Court of Heaven, may facilitate your reconciliation, and hasten from God an answer of peace. However, if after the use of these and such other meanes, inward fears do still remain, yet resolve, in despite of the Tempter, to continue in a way of duty, and patiently wait upon that God for the *joy of his salvation* (a) who so long a time waited for your conversion. The returning Prodigal, though he might take many weary steps in his journey home; yet when he draws near his journeys end, his father

Pf. 25. 14.

1 Cor. 2. 15

Gal. 6. 1.

(a) Psal.

40. 1.

1 Pet. 3.

20.

Pf. 23. 20.

Hos. 12. 6.

Isa. 30. 18.

Lam. 3.

25, 26.

father meets him, receives him, and entertains him with joy. So though you cannot, in reason, expect that God should presently, upon your repentance, give you assurance of pardon, yet let it satisfy you, that his Word doth assure you; and if you expect any sensible joy, he commonly reserves that best wine till the last; when you draw nearer to your home in heaven, you shall have a clearer sight of his reconciled face. Wherefore, to end this, be you careful to put on the *wedding garment* of Holiness, and whenever you die, you shall have undoubted welcome to that perpetual Banquet in the Kingdome of Glory.

Mat. 22. 11.  
 Heb. 12. 14  
 1 Tim. 2. 15  
 Rom. 6. 22

Thus I have given a short draught of what I should more largely have insisted upon, for the conviction, direction, and consolation of them, who have as yet done nothing or little to purpose in their turning to God. But the intended brevity of this Treatise will not permit me to expatiate on every point.

---

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

*Preparation for death, the duty of godly women when with child.*

**Y**OU that have tasted the goodness of the Lord, and have given up your selfe to him, must, upon this occasion, sequester your self awhile from all the incumbrances of secular affairs, and deny your self of the usual attendance of any company, and *entring into your chamber, shut the door,* and give attendance to these things.

Pl.4.4. &  
77.6.

Lam.3.40  
Prov.20.  
27.

*Commune with thy own heart, and let thy spirit make diligent search* after those secret sins that yet lurk in thy bosome; rub up thy memory of former sins (even those committed in the dayes of thy ignorance and vanity) *remember the wormwood and gall*, I mean, how sin was to thee upon thy first conversion; remember thy relapses any time since, into sins formerly confessed and bewailed, and consider thy unfruitfulness and unsuitable returns to God for his rich mercy in Christ, how little thou hast adorned his Gospel, but rather rendered Godliness less amiable by thy frequent miscarriages. In a word, examine thy senses, members, thoughts, and inward parts, of all their severall evils, and renew thy repentance in that serious and humble manner the Lord requires.

For



For your sins are ( in some respects) more  
provoking to God, than *the wickednesse of the  
wicked*. More dishonourable to his name;  
more grievous to his holy Spirit, more dis-  
pleasing to the good Angels, more advanta-  
geous to the evill Angels, more scandalous to  
the world, and more unbecoming your prin-  
ciples and heavenly hopes. Therefore, as  
*David* having sinned against God, wrote  
many penitentiall Psalms, and shed many a  
tear day and night; And *Solomon*, having  
sinned foulely after God had appeared to him,  
wrote his recantation, and penitentiall review  
of his life, in the Book of *Ecclesiastes*; And  
the woman ( after she was pardoned) *washed  
our Saviours feet with her teares*, and spent, as  
histories tell us, many years after in bewailing  
her sins: So go you and do likewise, remem-  
bring the holy Apostle, who sometimes  
shames himselfe for the sins of his unconverted  
estate, sometimes bewails the remainders of  
corruption that abode within him.

And renew also your resolutions of better  
obedience, and more circumspect walking in  
all manner of conversation. Chide your heart  
for its deceitfullnesse, charge your soul to be  
more mindfull of *the vows of God* that are upon  
you. Double upon your selfe all possible  
obligations, to recover what you have lost,  
and to stir up in you *those things that are ready  
to dye*.

Thus you should persevere in the work of  
G con-

*Recordari  
volo trans-  
actas fedi-  
tates meas,  
et carnales  
corrupti-  
ones animi,  
non quod  
eas amem,  
sed ut a-  
mem te,  
Deus meus.*  
*Augustin.  
in Confess.  
lib. 2: c. 16*

Cor. 15.  
58.

confession, lamentation, and supplication, till you find some such answerable effect in your heart, as may assure you, *that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* As our book of Martyrs relates of that famous Martyr, Mr. John Bradford, that he could not leave a duty till he had found communion with Christ in the duty, i. e. till he had brought his heart into a more holy frame. He could not leave Confession, till he had found his heart touched, broken, and humbled for sin; nor Petition, till he had found his heart taken with the beauty of the things he desired; nor could he leave Thanksgiving, till he had found his spirit enlarged, and his soul quickened in the return of praises.

(a) Nun-  
quam abs-  
te absq; te  
recedo.  
Bernard.  
Medit.

(a) Like that of devout Bernard who saith of himselfe, *that he never went away from God without God.* This is indeed the genius of every Saint, who have known by experience how good tis for them to draw nigh to God. And you have surely found God in the duty, if you find your heart more out of love with your selfe and the world, more humbled for sins past, more afraid of every appearance of evil for the future, and more delighting in all those duties, that may promote your graces, and weaken your corruptions in you. But remember, that *the duties of humiliation, confession, supplication, must be therefore delighted in because they leade us to God.* And, then do we serve him aright when we have learned to delight not in our services but in God. Wherefore raise  
your

your heart to that heavenly frame of thankful-  
 nesse, and praise to God, for the eternall  
 contrivances of his wisdom and purposes of  
 grace in giving Jesus Christ, for the fulnesse  
 of his promises, the freenesse of his covenant,  
 the sufficiency of his word, the blessed ope-  
 rations of his Spirit, & the transforming power  
 of his grace. Yea, let all that is within you blesse  
 his holy name for pardon of sin, for all other bene-  
 fits, whether deliverances from evil, or giving  
 you any thing that pertains to life and godli-  
 nesse, for any good hope through grace of an inher-  
 itance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in  
 the heavens for you, to which you are kept by the  
 power of God. And really, when I consider,  
 that the whole world lyes in wickednesse, I can-  
 not but praise God in your behalf, who hath  
 called you out of darknesse into his marvellous  
 light, and numbred you among the faithfull.  
 The Lord adde to your number, & inable you  
 by cheerfull and thankfull submission to  
 Christs easy yoke, to shew forth his praises.

Another good step towards your prepara-  
 tion for death would be, not onely to get a  
 heart truly penitent for sin, and thankfull to  
 God, but also charitable towards all men, that  
 is, to be of an inoffensive and courteous disposi-  
 tion to the wicked, affectionate to the godly, and  
 compassionate to the needy. But I meane espe-  
 cially this last, of having bowels of mercy to  
 them that be in want, which by way of emi-  
 nency is commonly called Charity, as charity

Rev. 19. 5.  
 Luk. 2. 13.

Psal. 33. 1.

Psal. 103.

1, 2, 3.

Psal. 139

14.

Rev. 15.

1 Peter 1

3, 4, 5.

1 Cor. 13.

1, 2, 3, 4

8. 13.

Col. 3. 14

1 Tim. 2.

15.

1 Pet. 4. 8

2 Pet. 1. 7.

Rev. 2. 19.

in the Greek is called *grace*; Implying, that there is no grace without charity, no evidence of the truth of our charity without liberality.

*For tis utterly a fault among many rich Ladies and gentlewomen, who yet professe religion, that they care not what they lay out in foolish gaming, immodest dresse, exotick garments &c. But, as if God had no right in any of their wealth, they are loath to understand the duty of charity, or to part with any thing considerable to pious uses, except some small matter to them whom they*

1 Tim. 6.  
17, 18.

*cannot for shame deny. Now the Apostle hath directed us, to charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in God; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. Let this full Scripture serve instead of many. And seeing*

2 Cor. 9. 6.  
7, 8, 9, 10

*they that sow plentifully shall reap plentifully, therefore put it not off till your last Will, or till your recovery from travell; but while you have opportunity do good to all but especially to the household of faith. Doe something for the poore, according as God hath blessed you in your estate, and as you can obtain your husbands consent ( unlesse you have a considerable allowance at your own disposal ) I say do some such eminent work of charity, as may give a proof of the truth of your love to Christ, and though it cannot expiate any former sins*

2 Cor. 8.  
24.

( Christ

(Christ onely can do that) yet may (in a sense) recompence what hath been defective in this kind; and may cause the poore, while you live, to give you a *disciples reward*, and to *blesse you in the name of the Lord*; and may also enable you the better, when, after the resurrection you shal be examined, whether you *have clothed the naked, fed the hungrey, visited the prisoners, &c.* to give up your account with joy and not with grief.

Mat. 10.  
41, 42.

Mat. 25.  
35, 36, 37.  
&c

In the next place, alienate your heart and affections from all things below heaven, *cast off every weight* of worldly desires, and begin to part with that in your affections, which you may shortly part with in person. Look upon all your comforts, as dying comforts, upon your body as a dying body, upon your house and estate, as fading vanities, which you must shortly forsake. Let not your care about any of these, take up that time, and those thoughts, which you had need at this season to imploy otherwise. And that you may the more clearly rid your hands of these things, let me advise you whenever you are with child, if you have any thing considerable of your own to dispose, to make your Will betimes, set your house in order, and then commit your Relations to the blessing of God, & all other things to the pleasure of his providence. And if there be any thing in your mind, to speake to any whom you love, by way of exhortation, advice, admonition, or reproof; doe it speedily, and with all your might. Leave

Heb. 12.9

Lamen. 1.9

Ila. 50. 4.  
Gal. 6. 10.

*a strict charge, as you can upon all that belong to you, to live soberly, righteously, and godlily. Your last words to them, if seriously and heartily uttered, with prayer to God for his Blessing, may stick more in their minds, then many a Sermon which they have carelessly heard. When the Patriarchs drew near their end, they gave many grave and pious instructions to their Relations; which are therefore left upon record that those that fear God, might imitate them, that so they may die the death of those righteous persons, and their latter end be like theirs. Our Saviour Himself, when he saw the hour of his sufferings to approach, spent his time wholly in comforting, teaching, and establishing disciples, in instituting, and administering the Sacrament of his Supper, and in prayer for them, and all his people to the end of the world. Yea thus the Saints and Martyrs in all ages, have left us innumerable examples of their pious and moving Speeches, when they were going hence. Thus a Candle when tis at the last point, and ready to go out, gives a sudden flash and a clearer shine: So you should endeavour, that your last words may be your best words, and your last works your best works.*

Having thus eased your heart, as much as may be, from all other cares, and made this faire progresse in your preparation; what remains, but that you look Death in the face, suffering no day to passe without serious thoughts

Nam. 23.  
Sec the 14,  
15, 16, and  
17. cap. of  
John.

Rev. 2. 19



thoughts upon your latter end, that so by frequent meditation, you may make death more familiar, and lesse terrible to you. Yea that by a right understanding of the nature of death, you may be *willing to be dissolved with Paul*, and ready to say with old *Simeon*, *Now Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Wherefore, look upon Death, not *as represented to a Sinner*, by blind and fearful Nature; but as represented in the Scriptures, to a Believer, sweetned, conquered, and altered by the Death of Christ. Well then, Death hath its harbingers, sickness and pain, which are commonly more troublesome then Death it self. It brings a dissolution of the frame of Nature, a putrefaction of the Body in a *land of darkness*, a departure of the soul into an unknown estate in another world. But what is there, in all this, hurtful? All the messengers and forerunners of death, which torment and destroy our bodies, cannot hinder a Believer from rejoycing, and saying with *David*, *Thy statutes are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.* And well may they sing on their sick beds, yea, on their death-beds, whom the Lord himself doth attend, to *make their beds in their sickness.* Old *Jacob*, fainting under a three-fold burthen, of sickness, of age, & the care of his posterity, refresheth himself by turning to the Lord, and *waiting for his salvation.* As for the dissolution of the frame of

Luk. 2. 29.

Job 10. 22.

Ps. 119. 54

Gen. 49.  
18



Nature, it impairs not your blessedness, nor can caule a disunion from Christ, *Nor life, nor death, nor any other thing, can separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our*

Rom. 8 39 Lord.

As when Christ died, though the comforting influences of his Divine Nature were suspended, or less visible, yet the hypostatical Union remained inseparable. So in our death, the local separation between body and soul is not a final disunion, much less can there be a cutting off the mystical Union of our persons with Christ. Therefore, though wicked men die in themselves, and die without Christ, as they lived out of him; yet the servants of God *die in Christ*, they *die to the Lord*, yea, *into the Lord*, viz. so as to be more nearly joyned to him then before.

Rev. 14. 13

1 Thes. 4.

14.

Rom. 14. 1

7, 8.

Phil. 1. 23.

There is in every member of Christ a *divine Nature*, not subject to death or dissolution. Therefore, though as the children of Men they die, yet as the children of God they live. Though, as the children of *Adam*, they *return to the earth*; yet, as the members of Christ, they *return to God*. And though their bodies die, because severed from their soul, yet it liveth in death, because it is still joyned to the Lord. *God is the God of Abraham, yet not the God of the dead*. Every Atome, and unknown scattered parcel of a believers dust, are deposited in the hands of a faithful Creator. So that though they *be dead*, yet *their life is hid*  
with

*with Christ in God.* And as for the darkness and putrefaction of the Grave, it matters not; its putrefaction must be, that the garments of our *polluted flesh* may be changed into one without spot. This *Tabernacle*, which our sins have defiled, like the Lepers house, must be *pulled down*, that at the day of the *restitution of all things*, it may be made a *more glorious body*; Untill which day it *rests* in the Grave, as in a bed of sleep, and finds darkness in a dormitory not inconvenient. And though the soul depart from all the delights and society of men, and no eye can see whither it flies, and into what habitations it enters; though the state of departed souls be a mystery, which reason may talk of, but never fully discover, yet by Faith we look at *the things that are not seen, even the things that are eternal.* We know (saith the Apostle) that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. Whither I go, ye know, saith Christ, and the way ye know. We know that there is a perfecting of the spirits of just men, that there is an *Abrahams Bosome*, a *Paradise*, a *Right hand of God*, and many mansions in our Fathers house, where they who have believed, do enter into rest. 'Tis, therefore, our idleness of spirit, our slowness of heart to consider, that makes the state of the dead unknown and undesirable; and the joyes of the world to come to be, in a manner, fabulous

1 Cor. 3.1

Joh. 14.4

R. Bolton  
General  
Direction  
8c. p. 54.

Rom. 5. 13

fabulous and incredible. But surely it would much adde to your *peace and joy in believing*, if you would oftener lift up the eyes of your minde to the Heaven of Heavens, and by Faith enter into the *Holy of Holies*, and view the Scituation, Mansions, Treasures, and Delights of the *heavenly Jerusalem*; and you shall soon see, that the present state of Glory, which you enter into at death (not to speak of that far greater measure at the Resurrection) is such, as may abundantly cure all sad apprehensions concerning your departure. What shall I say of your immunities from all temporall evils, from that *vanity and vexation of spirit*, which doth perpetually elude and discruciate the mind? Present evils are innumerable, and future evils are unavoidable: *Sufficient to every day is the evil thereof*, and yet we know not but the morrow may bring forth greater. What a comfort is it to be in a perpetual Ark of safety, wherein we may swim above all waters? To be taken up out of this *miry pit*, and to be *taken away from the evil to come*, to be out of the reach of hellish tongues, and bloody hands, (*for the dead know nothing at all*, that is, their senseless bodies, and glorified souls, know no misery from all the world can do against them: though the Papists accurse and burn their bones for Hereticks; yet they are not touched with the feeling of any infirmity. the dead neither know, nor care any thing at all, what men do for them or against them here

upon earth). Also, what a blessedness is it, to be delivered from the temptation of ill company, and the contagion of the (a) rotten breath of wicked men, and the vexation that is caused to every righteous Lot, in seeing and hearing them? Wo is me, saith David, that I sojourn in Mesech. Also, to be free of Satans importunate suggestions; to escape him, who is, in these last dayes, come down with great wrath, because his time is but short. Verily, if one knew what opposition the host of evil angels (that fill the regions of the aire) do make against the free ascent of a gracious soul to Heaven; it must needs be, that the joy they conceive of their safe arrival, by the conduct of good Angels, must be very great: this last instance of Satans mad and malicious endeavours, being fresh in their memories. But content must it needs adde, to see the Daughter to destroy the Mother of Mischief: I mean, that whereas Sin is the first Parent of Death, Death onely puts an end to all our sins. Sampson slew many Philistines in his life, but at his death he slew the Lords themselves. So we may mortifie some sins in our life, but at death we triumph over our Master-sinns, yea, all our sins. Yea, let me yet adde, that it is no small part of our gain by Death, to be freed from all laborious Graces and Duties; such as Fear, Hope, Repentance, Watchfulness, Self-denial, &c. Confession, Humiliation, Praying, Hearing, Receiving

ευαγγ. λόγος  
Alludit ad  
pomaputri-  
da & male  
olentia, que  
fatore nos  
turbant,  
&c. Zanch.  
in Eph. 4.  
29.

1 Pet. 1. 8.

ving Sacraments, &c. For all these argue Imperfections, Wants, and Corruptions abounding in us. In short, *after death they come to judgement*, have their absolution from God himself, and shall see all debts crossed out of *his book of remembrance*, are admitted to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have fellowship with the innumerable company of Angels, understand the mysteries they now believe; and are with him, *whom having before not seen, yet they loved, but now rejoyce in him with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* But all this contains but that present state of Glory, which they immediately possess after death. But at the Resurrection, when body and soul are reunited, the sentence of Absolution more publickly pronounced, the wicked condemned, time finished, and their whole persons admitted to fulness of glory and happiness; then, I say, there is a great addition made to their felicity; then their souls shall no longer cry, *How long, Lord, holy and true,* as they did before, *while their bodies were under corruption, & the Church under persecution;* but shall be fully satisfied with the perpetuity of that blessedness and perfection God hath crowned them with. But I list not here to enter into so large a field, as the state of Glory after the Resurrection. Many others have written largely of it: and what I have before spoken of the state of departed Souls, presently after their going hence, does, I think,

think, more properly belong to such considerations, as may help to prepare you for death, that you may not be in bondage with the fear thereof; but having rightly understood it, as now represented, may say, with more assured confidence than wicked Agag, Surely the bitterness of death is past.

---

## CHAP. XI.

*To resolve upon some special return of thankfulness, after their deliverance, is also the duty of Women with child.*

**H**ERE you must rightly understand, what I do not mean in this direction, as well as what I do mean. Know, therefore, that I do not desire to draw you into rash vows, no, nor indeed to any vows at all. I observe it too common among afflicted persons, perhaps 'tis so also among women with child, to make many vows, that if ever God deliver them, they will leave such a sin, abound in such a duty, decline such and such temptations; read so much, and so often, &c. But I have also observed, that such vows seldom end well. I could relate sad instances of some whom I have known, who, after the commission of some foul sin, have, in my presence, expressed as credible serious repen-

tance,

tance, as ever I could desire, yea, have, to my seeming, been in utter despair for the present; so that I have been not a little troubled to get them to believe, that their sins were pardonable, and their souls not past remedy, & when at last they began to apprehend any hope, they have upon a sudden, ere I was aware, made vows, Never more to come near such and such companions, and places of temptation; yea, have also seconded these their vows with immediate earnest prayer to God in secret, for his assistance: and yet have (to my knowledge) risen from their knees, and gone immediately to the same wicked practice, and been as deeply plunged as before, and then been in the same trouble again, make the like vows again, and relapsed in like manner again. This, I say, I have known, and seriously considering of the matter, I cannot assign any other cause thereof, then this, That those vows were unwarrantable, and God would not be intreated to give his blessing to that for which he had never given his command. For though in the Old Testament there is as clear examples of paying Vowes, as of offering a Sacrifice. yet in the New Testament, he who commissioned his Ministers to teach us to observe whatsoever he had commanded (though he is graciously pleased to condescend to many particulars, that might seem of less concernment, yet) gave no instruction to his Apostles or Ministers, to prescribe making Vowes, as a help to holiness, or a remedy against sin or tempta-

Tileni syn-  
tag. disp. 43  
in tertium  
præceptum,  
p. 267.



temptation. So that, *unless it were agreeable to his will, it will hardly conduce to his glory.* Besides, when we vow any thing, it must be either a thing commanded and necessary, or uncommanded. To vow to do a thing commanded of God, is needless. For his command layes a greater obligation upon us already. And if the thing vowed be uncommanded, then it is not necessary; and consequently, it must be *dangerous to lay our selves under a necessity of doing that which our great Law-giver never made necessary.* For this vow of unnecessary things must be either absolute, or conditional. An absolute vow layes us under the snare of impossibilities, yea, under the danger of sin; a conditional vow carries with it the danger of inconstancy; *such vows being seldome held of much force, because circumstances may so often vary, that they may quickly seem discharged of their vomes.* As for instance, Suppose you make a vow, If God shall recover you, to give so much to the poor, to read so many chapters a day, to pray so often, or the like. This is an absolute vow. And now, if Providence render it impossible to give so much, without great prejudice to your family-necessities, or to read or pray so often, without danger of your health, or omitting some more necessary and seasonable good; in this case you cannot possibly keep your vow without sin. If your vow be *conditional* to give so much, if you can spare

spare it, to read and pray so much, if you have leisure and strength: this is needlessly vowed, for you are already bound by your vow in Baptism, and by the common bonds of Religion, to give what you can to the poor, and to serve God with all your might, and to redeem your time for him. *And tis better to doe what we do for God, out of conscientious obedience to his Law, then out of superstitious observation of voluntary vows For who hath required this at your hands?* The Papists do exceed all other Sects in variety of Religious vows, not onely abounding in the use of them, but in the grossest abuse, making vows of Continency, regular obedience, &c. to be meritorious, above all other good works commanded in the morall Law. The very naming of such bold impiety is sufficient to render it ridiculous to all that have the *Law of God written in their hearts.* Wherefore to conclude this businesse of vows, I say with a (a) reverend Author speaking of the unhappy vow of *Jephtha*; *The conscience shall never find peace in any way, but that which we see before us, and which we know safe both in the kind and circumstances. There is no comfort in, Peradventure I may please God. Therefore be very cautelous of making any vows, and seriously consider, and candidly accept my opinion herein, that the safest way is to let them alone.* But now tis time to shew you what I do mean by these Religious purposes,

Perkins  
*cas. of conf.*  
 lib. 2. c. 1.  
 qu. 2. page.  
 (mibi) 97.

(a) B. Hals  
*contemplat.*  
 lib. 10. p.  
 (mibi) 173.

I mean, that you should consider seriously how defective you have been, in prosecution of those Religious ends, that the Gospel and your holyprofession doth mind you of, and that you would firmly purpose and resolve with your selfe, to endeavour to do more for God than yet you have done. As for instance; suppose your resolutions be, of avoiding some evil, or some occasion or appearance of evill, or something that doth hinder that which is good; as to resolve (supposing you are by your quality concerned herein) to abridge your selfe of some of your gallanery, to be more frugall in your apparell, and not to be a slave to the people of this Generation; nor to follow every ridiculous and apish fashion of this World; To spend lesse time in your tedious dressing and trimming every morning, and to redeem some of it, for the beholding your sins in the glasse of the Law, and Christ in the glasse of the Gospel, that you may trim your soul and adorn it after the likenesse of Christ; or to spend lesse time and money in gaming; or to be more seldome in idle visits, especially of such as will not endure in their company, any talke of God, whether in good sort or in bad (as the Jesuits once prohibited) but are wholly addicted to such evil communication as corrupts good manners. Or if you would resolve upon any thing positively good, or praise worthy and of good report, as, To be more constant, frequent, laborious, in your closet Devotions; to be more carefull of your family, that it may not be

1 Tim. 2.

9. 10.

Exod. 38.

8.

Mellius est  
habere ma-  
lorum odium  
quam con-  
sortium.

Bern. de  
modo bene  
vivendi.  
serm. 60.

Prov. 31.

27.

a cage of unclean birds, and a habitation of Devils, but a household of faith, wherein all wickednesse shall at least hide its head, and the duties of Religion and Profession of Godliness, have more countenance and reputation; or to be more severe to your children (I abhor cruelty and passionate hasty corrections) I meane to get free of that accursed fondnesse, whereby so many children have beene curses to their parents on earth, and cursed firebrands in hell at their death. Remember old Eli, and be not partaker of his sins, lest you be partaker of his plagues. Or if you resolved to take more notice of your godly neighbours about you, who are made as the off-scouring of the world, and to make it more manifest that your delight is in the Saints, and that you hate them that hate the Lord, yea hate them with perfect hatred and count them your enemies. Or if you would remember who have provoked and offended you, by slandering you or otherwise, and now shew your selfe courteous and loving, to them especially; requiting them good for evill, and never remembring or upbraiding them with their offensive miscarriages towards you. Or if you would resolve to spare somewhat more from your superfluities (a) and sinfull expences, for the preservation of the lives of many starving poor; and, to that end, alway keep a stock by you, to lay out, as occasion shall require, for pious uses: (b) yea if you sought out objects of your charity, and sent to some of the more modest poor, to know how 'tis with them, that

) Divitis  
superflua  
pauperi  
sunt neces-  
saria; alie-  
na retinet,  
qui ista  
perdet.

Aug in  
Pl-147.

(b) R. Bol-  
tons Gen.  
Direc. p.  
162

Exod. 25.  
5.

that you might buy or make cloaths for the naked, as Dorcas did, and every good woman, as Solomon describes her, should doe, and get food for the hungry, physick for the sick, harbour for the destitute, imployment for the diligent &c. This was a motive to Peter to raise up Dorcas, that she had clothed the poor widows. And this, sayes one, was the practice of the blessed Virgin, who having great gifts from the three wise men, (a) that followed the star, yet bestowed all on the poor, and shortly after, at her purification, had but two turtle Doves or two young Pigeons to offer, which was, by Gods appointment, the manner of the poorer Jews, who were not able to buy a lambe. Thus I have given divers instances of such particulars as you may make the matter of pious Resolution. And if in these, or any other of like nature, you fix your intentions of abounding more, and growing more fruitfull in every good work; it will be, doubtlesse, thank-worthy with God, if he see your heart thus firmly bent to observe that precept of his, *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorifie me.* How would you glorifie God, when he delivers you? What, by a meer verbal acknowledgement, and not by some signall testimony of your thankfullnesse, and some futeable return for so great a mercy? Wherefore, I say again, resolve, if God deliver you, to be more faithfull to your principles, more usefull in your generation, more alive to God, more

A&amp;S 9.36

Prov. 31.

20.

(a) Supponendum est quod illa munera

pauperibus erogaverat.

N. Hanap.

Patr. Hierosol. virtutum &amp; vitiorum exempla. cap.

125. p. 166

Levit. 5. 7.

Psal. 50. 19

*affectionate to Christ and his members, more dead to the world, more eminent in some particular service to God, whereby you may shew forth his praise, and acknowledge him in your works, and shine with your light before men. And thus having in some measure dispatched the duties before mentioned, you may the more boldly addresse your self to what next follows, viz. to exercise and strengthen your faith.*

---

## CHAP. XII

*To labour for faith in Christ, or, if they have faith, to endeavour to exercise it, in trust and dependance upon God for pardon of sin, is also the duty of Women with child.*

**T**O get faith, and to get an interest in Christ, are great words, & more commonly spoken than understood. Know therefore, that faith is not a beleieving that I am pardoned, or that I have true grace, and shall certainly be saved, this is not the nature, but fruit, of justifying faith. But, Faith is a believing the Gospel, which represents and offers Christ to us, as the only all-sufficient Saviour, and the receiving him as such. Faith looks on Christ as revealed in his word, to be our Priest, Prophet, and King, or the way, the truth, and the life. Accordingly, it causeth us, to renounce our own Righteousness,



ness; to renounce our own Reason, and to believe all mysteries of godliness, *upon his bare Word* (thus becoming fools that we may be wise in him), and to deny our selves, and renounce our own wills, and all things that oppose themselves against Christ, and to make his will our supreme rule in all our actions. Thus faith receives Christ, with all his benefits, graces, laws; yea with his yoke, crosse, reproach; counting the treasures of the world as nothing, in comparison of the *meanest and poorest* things, that appertain to Christ, and have his name upon thē. So that they who thus receive Christ, believe in him, & are justified by him, yield to Christ the *chief interest* in all that is theirs; in their understanding by believing him, in their affections by loving him, in their wills by obeying him, in their time, strength, estate, and all things they are or have, by serving him with their whole heart, their whole soul, and their whole strength, all their dayes. *And such have doubtlesse an interest in Christ.* Wherefore if you doubt, complain, and torment your self with such inward feares as would all be removed, if you *once knew that you believed, and had an interest in Christ;* then stir up your self, now, to receive him as he is offered, be willing to be saved by him in his own way, let his interest prevail in you above all other interests; and you shall find that, *faithfull and obedient compliance with him, will sooner bring comfort than*



*meer complaints.* Be not then *slathfull in this* businesse, but *servent in spirit*, seeking the Lord, for increase of faith and help against your infidelity. Doe not *by a heart of unbelief* depart in the least, from him, upon any termes; but *lay aside every sin that hath easily beset you*, (else your complaints are not in earnest); patiently persevere in well doing, and in a way of holiness accept comfort. (Yet look not presently and too eagerly for a high measure of sensible joy and assurance; for that is *scarce a promised mercy, given to a few who are most eminently holy, and with them it doth not alwayes abide neither*). And if you are wholly without joy or peace in thus believing, you are *not streightned in God, but in your selfe*, because you either retain some sin, which grieves the Spirit, or listen to temptations, or cherish your fears, and refuse to be comforted. Wherefore for your further help consider, the freenesse, fulnesse, fuitablenesse, and multitude of those *exceeding great and precious Promises*, whereby you have all things that pertain to life and godlinesse; promises of pardon, and promises of deliverance; promises to your soul, and to your body; promises of all needfull good, and of all things *working together for good* in this life, and promises of all good, in the enjoyment of God who is the chief good, and that with life everlasting. Search then the Scriptures, peruse your Charter, read the last Will and Testament  
of

of Jesus Christ, and pick out, and observe such promises, as will sufficiently reach you, in this or any condition imaginable. In so great variety, as the storehouse of Scripture affords, I shall set only some few before your eyes.

### Promises of pardon of sin.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the un- *Ila. 57. 7*  
righteous man his thoughts, and let him return  
unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him,  
and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.

I will cleanse them from all their iniquities, *Ezek. 37*  
and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby *23.*  
they have transgressed, and whereby they have  
sinned against me.

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy trans- *Ila. 43: 25.*  
gressions for my own sake, and I will not remem-  
ber thy sins.

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth *Micah. 7.*  
iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the *18.*  
remnant of his heritage?

I will be mercifull to their unrighteousnesse, *Heb. 8. 12*  
and their sins and iniquities will I remember  
no more.

Be it known unto you all, men and brethren, *Act. 13. 38.*  
that through this man, is preached unto you for-  
giveness of sins.

Come unto me all ye that labour and are hea- *Mat. 11. 28.*  
vie laden, and I will give you rest.

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried *Ila. 53. 4.*  
our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgres- *5.*  
sions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the cha-  
stisement

stisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was numbred with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

**A& 10.43** To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

**A& 13.39** And, by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses.

**Rom. 3.25** We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for remission of sins that are past.

Many other places of this nature you may turn to at your leisure. As, Isa. 33.24. Mat. 12.31. James 5.15. Psal. 130.4. Dan. 9.9. Exod. 34.7. Luke 1.77. Luke 24.47. Mat. 26.28. John 20.23. Rom. 4.25. Rom. 5.16, 18. Rom 8.33.

And if you think your sinns greater then ordinary, yet be not so weak, as to count that any bar or impediment to saving grace. To Omnipotency there is nothing great, nothing difficult; to infinite love nothing is troublesome, or can be a hinderance. God, who commands us to forgive till seventy times seven

seven, can as easily forgive a thousand talents as a hundred pence. What is our Bucket to his Ocean? If you give your hope and your soul for lost, yet *he came to seek and to save that which is lost.* Luk. 19. 10

He delighted to cure the most desperate diseases, when he was upon earth. And he usually healed body and soul together, and told them, that their *sinnes were forgiven them*, as well as that they should *arise and walk.* Many of those sinners that Christ shewed mercy to, were most infamous, and,

to mens seeming, as unlikely to have been saved, as any of that generation. What think you of *Mary Magdalene*, out of whom our Saviour cast seven devils? and of that

woman that *washed his feet with her teares?* who, though a notorious known sinner (an

harlot) yet had all her sins forgiven her, & our Saviour largely defending and explaining the

freeness of his grace to her? What of the woman taken in adultery, whom our Saviour did not condemn, but, with charge to *sin no more*,

dismissed her in peace? What think you of the Apostle himself, who thus speaks? *For we our selves were sometime foolish and disobedient,*

*deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasure, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.* But after that the kindness and love

of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. That

being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs

Luke 8. 26

Luk. 7. 37.  
38, 39, &c.

John 8.  
10, 11. c  
Titus 3. 3.  
4, 5, 7.

1 Pet. 4. 3. heirs according to the hope of eternal life. What  
 of Peter, and the converted Jewes, who had  
 walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine,  
 revellings, banquettings, and abominable idola-  
 tries; and in the former lusts in their ignorance;  
 1 Pet. 1. 3, yet of such sinners he sayes, Blessed be the  
 4, &c. God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who,  
 according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten  
 us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of  
 Christ from the dead. It were endless to heap  
 up all examples in this kind. You shall doe  
 well to see what the Colossians were, when  
 Col. 3. 5, they lived and walked in fornication, unclea-  
 6, 7. nesses, covetousness, &c. The Corinthians, when  
 1 Cor. 5. 9, they were Fornicators, Idolaters, Sodomites,  
 10, 11. Thieves, Drunkards, &c. yet now are washed,  
 sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
 and by the Spirit of our God. And was it for  
 their sakes onely, that God shewed mercy to  
 them? No: but also to encourage us, when  
 heavy laden with sin, to expect the like. For  
 so the Apostle, more then once, doth assure  
 Eph. 2. 1, us. As when he speaks of the Ephesians, and  
 2, 3, 4, 5, himself, and all believers, that in times past  
 8, &c. they were over-ruled by the Devil, and the  
 world, and their own lusts, fulfilling the de-  
 sires of the flesh, and of the mind: But God, who  
 is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he  
 loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath  
 quickned us together with Christ (by grace ye  
 are saved) and hath raised us up together, and  
 made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ  
 Jesus

Jesus, That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Jesus Christ. To the same purpose is that other excellent passage of his; *This is a faithfull saying, and worthy of all* 1 Tim. 1. 35, 16. *acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, whereof I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*

To conclude this, I shall onely adde the observation of a blessed Author. *In the Genealogie of Christ there are but four women mentioned, and they are all branded with a mark of infamy in Scripture-story. The first is Thamar, Mat. 1. 3. she was incestuous, for she lay with her father-in-law, Gen. 38. 38. 2. Rahab an harlot, Heb. 11. 31. 3. Ruth, who came of Moab the son Levi, by incest with his own daughter, Gen. 19. 37. 4. Bathsheba, and she was guilty of adultery.* Why is all this, but to shew that free grace is no respecter of persons, except it be to have most tender regard to the most miserable object, and to pardon those most readily, who see themselves most guilty and to wash them as white as snow, whose sins were of a scarlet dye. And for your further increase of faith, I would advise you, if you can conveniently have it, that you would, with all humility, and earnest desires of favour with God, go to the Sacrament of the Lords

Mr. Love,  
his Zealous  
Christian.



Joh. 6. 53.  
54. 55. 56.

Lords Supper, the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, where you may see Christ crucified for you, and may receive such symbols and pledges of his good-will towards you, as will be so many *Seals* to his Promises; and there you shall find *his flesh* to be *meat* indeed, and *his blood* drink indeed. He is the living bread, which shall strengthen your heart, and his love is stronger then wine, and shall make glad your heart. I doubt, that the seldome or careless use of this blessed ordinance is one great cause why so many Christians are of weak faith. And if, with other endeavours and inquiries for comfort, this were more frequently and rightly used, we should find their strangeness from God (which is the chief cause of their fears) to cease; and delight in him, and love to him, and consequently, peace of conscience to increase, by this neerer converse and communion with him. Mary Magdalene, as they say, being near her end, came and received the Body and Blood of our Lord in the place of their Christian assembly, and there comfortably expired before the Table of the Lord.

Also peruse *Dauids Psalms*, and, as you easily may, take notice of those especially, that contain complaints of Sin, Fear, Calamities, and also praises to God for hearing and delivering, and promises of the like mercy of God to all his people in their severall exigencies. And sing these *Psalms* leisurely and considerately alone by your self. You will find the voice



voice to quicken your meditation upon the matter, the matter to affect your heart, and the blessing of God to attend his owne ordinance, who hath commanded us to admonish our selves (a) in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual (a) Eph. Songs. Besides, it is most unquestionably pleasant to those good Angels, who are ministering Spirits to attend you for good. 5 19.

But if you are not satisfied, by Promises, Sacraments, Psalms, &c. then look beyond all these, to the goodness of God, which is infinite. His goodness is the fountain of the Promises, and therefore it is, that the streams make glad the people of God. Now it is an acceptable work of Faith, if we cannot see a Promise speaking directly to us, or are not able to apply them, yet even then to cast our selves upon infinite goodness, to trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay our selves upon our God. For his Goodness contains more in it, then Promises do expresse. It never entred into the tongues of men or Angels, fully to expresse the height, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof. Let this, therefore, keep you in a dutiful and quiet expectation of comfort, that there is mercy with God, an inexhaustible treasure of mercy, riches of grace, an overflowing fulness, which can as well cease to be, as to be faithful and compassionate, in dwelling with the contrite and humble heart, to revive the hearts of the humble, and to revive the spirits of the contrite ones.

Isa. 50. 10.  
Plal. 9. 10.

Isa. 57. 15.

## C H A P. XIII.

*Trusting in the Lord for deliverance, the duty of women with child.*

**T**Hough trusting in God exclude not the use of means, and Gods providence over us doth not discharge us from provision for our selves, and preventing what we can of the danger and hurt of any approaching evil; yet it surely excludes our trust in any thing besides him. And therefore, whatever estate, friends helps, strength, you have; yet trust not to these. For God onely brings to the birth, and gives strength to bring forth. Rachels Midwife could bid her be of good comfort; but she could not give her the comfort of a happy deliverance. Miserable comforters are Midwives, Neighbours, and Kindred, if God withhold the fruit of the womb. And if he speak the word (after others have tormented the labouring woman, and tried themselves with fruitless endeavours, and at last given over any hopes of success) I say, if he speak the word, she shall soon be delivered; for, He shutteth and none can open; he openeth and none can shut; he letteth and none can work; he worketh and none can let. He can let out the imprisoned

imprisoned infant, raise up the fainting mother; bring strength out of weakness, and life out of death. Wherefore, furnishing your self with such promises as he hath made to his people in all their extremities, strengthen your faith, hope in the Lord, and quietly wait for his salvation.

Among the many promises of this kind, I shall mention a few which are obvious, and leave you to observe the rest in your own private reading.

*His anger endureth but a moment : in his favour is life : Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* Ps. 30. 5.

*For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be alwayes wrath : for the spirit should fail before me, and the soules which I have made.* Isa. 57. 16.

*Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him : For he knoweth our frame, he remembreth that we are but dust.* Psal. 103. 15.

*By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.* Isa. 27. 9.

*When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* 1 Cor. 11. 32.

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment.* 2 Cor. 4. 17.

moment, worketh for us a far more eternal and exceeding weight of glory.

Job 5. 13. He maketh sore, and he bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

Vcr. 19. He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

Pf. 33. 18. Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy: to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

Pf. 34. 17. The righteous cry, and the Lord beareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

Pf. 46. 1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Na. 41. 10. Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Isa. 49. 14. For God hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palmes of my hands, &c.

Pfal. 91. 14. 15. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he hath trusted in Isa. 26. 3, thee.

Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he shall Pl. 55. 22. sustain thee.

Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him Pl. 62. 1. cometh my salvation.

My soul, wait thou onely upon God: for my expectation is from him.

With many other like places. Now what can we expect for higher assurance, then such re-iterated promises of that God, with whom it is impossible to lie. David, therefore, who was (more then ordinary) experienced in variety of afflictions, and the comforting power of the Word under them, tells us, I had fainted, unless I had believed, to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. And thus plead with God, Remember thy Word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. And again, This is my comfort in mine affliction, for thy Word hath quickned me.

Let me here crave leave to transcribe a few sweet passages out of an excellent Author, than whom none hath written more judiciously, piously, and plainly, in our English tongue.

(a) The godly are allowed to live by Faith in times of affliction, when calamities of all sorts

Mr. Ball's  
Treat. of  
Faith, par.  
2. ch. 7. p.  
318,

compasse them about. For, *Godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come.*

1 Tim. 4.8 God hath promised, that *all things shall work together for good, to them that love him, and*  
 Rom. 8.28 *that he will not suffer us to be tempted above*  
 1 Cor. 10.13 *what we are able. And it is our duty to believe*

Act. 27.25 God, that it shall be even as he hath told us.

The godly have had this confidence in former times, whose practice is both a token of our privilege, and a pattern of our duty. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Though*

Psal. 56.3. *I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,*

Psal. 23.4. *I will fear no evil. For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staffe they comfort me. God*

is hereby much glorified, that we rely upon him, as our rock of defence, all-sufficient Saviour, and surest friend, in time of distresse. It being one of his most royal titles, to be a re-

Psal 68. 5. *fuge for the oppressed, a help to the poor, strength*  
 & 9. 9. *to the needy, &c. And therefore will the Lord*

& 10. 14. *wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and*  
 Isa. 25. 4. *therefore will he be exalted, that he may have*

& 30. 18. *mercy upon you.*

Confidence in God doth the more binde and oblige him, as it were, to do us good.

Psal. 37. 40. If a friend rely upon our faithful promise, we take our selves bound, not to frustrate his expectation at a dead lift. The

Lord will never leave the soul destitute which trusts in him. The faithful have promised themselves help, because they trusted in the

Lord, Psal. 57. 1. & 143. 8, 9. And so hope in  
 God,



God, and to have God for our help, are linked together in Scripture. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.* After serious humiliation of the soul, Faith brings tidings, that God will look down from Heaven in mercy, and bring help in fittest season. *If their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, &c. When I fall I shall rise, when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me.*

Ps. 146.5.  
Deut. 4.  
29, 31, 32.

Mich. 7.

8.

This dependance on the Promises, which Faith worketh, is absolute, without limitation of time, measure of affliction, or manner of deliverance. All these it referreth to the good pleasure of his Will, and reposeth it self securely on his faithful Word and Providence. Fear rides post to out-run Danger, and Folly would soon dispatch our mourning part, to be in the house of laughter: but he that believeth, maketh not haste, knowing that Gods truth never faileth, his wisdom chuseth the fittest meanes and season, and his Compassion is readiest, when, to sense and reason, it is furthest off. Thus he.

But seeing these Promises forementioned are general, and you would willingly see (perhaps) something more expressly fitted to your own condition, therefore I shall subjoyn a few other Scriptures, which may abundantly satisfy in this case.



**Ma. 4. 3, 4** - *Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am he, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you, and will deliver you.*

**Luke 1. 13, 14.** - *Fear not Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall beare thee a son, and thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoyce at his birth.*

**John 16. 21.** - *A woman, when she is in travel, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of a child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. Through faith in him that promised, Sarah received strength to conceive and to bring forth.*

**Heb. 11. 11** - *Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in the faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.* This last place is most full and remarkable: for the Apostle had said immediately before, that *the woman was first in the transgression.* Now this transgression deserved all misery, pain, and torment, both here and hereafter, without any hope of end or deliverance: but see the goodnesse and mercy of our God! saith he, *notwithstanding her sin, God will save her; notwithstanding the curse, God will bless her.* For the curse that came upon women at first, is wonderfully moderated, and the rigour thereof abated, even from the first denunciation thereof. Though God had newly cursed the earth, yet he had respect to Abel and his offering. Though he

he cursed man, yet it is not an onely curse, but a command and is a blessing annext, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread.* Here is indeed a curse, that their labour should be wearisome; but a command, that they should labour; and a promise, that in so doing, they should have bread to eat. So, I say, is the curse upon women, *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception: In sorrow shalt thou bring forth.* This sorrow and pain is the Curse; but it is presently sweetned with a promise of bringing forth. So that notwithstanding the danger of this Curse, Eve was (through Mercy) the Mother of many Children; and notwithstanding you all inherit the same curse, yet you are capable of the same blessing. And, in a word, if you continue in Faith, Charity, Holiness, and Sobriety, you shall find, that though you are a daughter of Eve, yet you shall be saved.

To which purpose, a Reverend Author (a) hath these words. 'Afflictions have this advantage, that they occasion God to shew that mercy to us, whereof the prosperous are incapable. It would not be seem a Mother to be so indulgent to a healthfull Child, as to a sick. It was to *Manoah's* wife that the Angel appeared, not to her husband—for that the birth of the child would cost her more dear then her husband.—As Satan layes his batteries ever to the weakest; so, contrarily, God addresseth his comforts to

(a) Bish. Hall  
cont. lib.  
no. p. 186.

those hearts, that have most need, As at the first, because *Eve* had most reason to be dejected, for that her sin had drawn Man into the transgression, therefore the Cordial of God most respecteth her; The seed of the woman shall break the Serpents head. *Thus far be.* And surely we cannot imagine any higher reason, why God suffered the first sin to be, and to bring so much sin and misery upon us, but that the more miserable we are, the more would the glory of his grace appear, in pardoning and saving us in the second Adam. And why would God have suffered sin to bring such pain & danger upon women in travel, but *'twas his will, that there should ever be, while the world stands, that most eminent object and instance of his delivering power.* For thus it hath pleased our Supreme Ruler and Creatour, that his servants should be brought low, that he may then help them. Of this we have plentiful experiments in his providences towards men and women. And if you would be armed against despondency, and have your trust and hope in God confirmed, you must make great reckoning of those happy experiences of Gods seasonable help, which he hath at any time vouchsafed to you or others. *If so be that you have tasted, that the Lord is gracious, that he hath heard your voice and your supplication, what should hinder you from expecting the same mercy from him, when you are in the like need, if he see*

it to be for your good? You cannot but know, that many sinfull, weak, helpelesse women, have been delivered even without means, have been raised up from the gates of death, been satisfied with long life, and have seen their childrens children. Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindnesse of the Lord. Psal. 109. 43.

Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. If we have learned patience under former tribulations, & had experience of Gods remembring mercy in judgement, this should produce hope in us of the like help from him for the future. Rom. 5. 4.

What other thing made the Apostle in great afflictions to stay himself upon God, and cast his care on him, but this experience and long proof he had of Gods tender care over him. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver us, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. And again, I was delivered out of the mouth of Lyon, and the Lord shall deliver me from every evill work, and will preserve me to his heavenly Kingdom. R. Rogers 7 treatises ch. 18 rr. 4. P. 518. 2 Cor. 1. 10. 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18.

Yea, long before him, we find David thus reasoning, The Lord, that delivered me out of the paw of the Lyon and the paw of the Bear, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And again, Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoyce. 2 Sam. 17. 36, 37. Psal. 63. 7.

Our Fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and thou

Psal. 22,  
 45.  
 Psal. 30.  
 2, 3, 4, 5.  
 8, 9, 10,  
 11, 12.  
 Psal. 31.  
 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.  
 The like  
 passages  
 in the 32,  
 33, and 34  
 Psalms.  
 Joh. 1. 5.  
 Heb. 13. 5,  
 6.

*thou didst deliver them: they cried unto thee and were delivered, they trusted in thee and were not confounded.* Many such excellent passages to this purpose you may observe in other places, especially in the Psalms, *as you may see in the places quoted in the margin.* And 'tis observable, that *David* makes his own experiences a ground for others confidence. As doth also the Apostle, when he quotes that promise made to *Joshuah*, and applies it to every believer, *He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* So that we may boldly say, *the Lord is my helper.* And so *St. James*; Because *Elias* (who was a man subject to like passions as we are), was heard for rain, and again for dry weather, therefore all Christians may expect much benefit in their sicknesses, from the prayers of the faithfull.

Wherefore seeing *Eve*, the first Author of your infirmities, and *Sarah*, *Rebeccah*, *Hannah*, *Ruth*, and all others recorded in Scripture, were women of *like passions and infirmities with you*; and many of your neighbours, who are as great, (if not greater) sinners than your self, have this usuall benefit of Gods delivering power and mercy, therefore you may undoubtedly conclude, and boldly say, *the Lord is my helper.*

Consider also that God, who is *over all, in all, and throug h all*, extends his care hereinto all his creatures. *There is nothing so difficult but 'tis under his power, nothing so small but 'tis under*

*under his care. His providence watcheth over the Fowls of the ayr, and the Beasts of the field, in producing their young. And there is no more cleaver argument, that there is a providence of God over all the world, than the conservation of the species and kinds of all creatures in a continuall succession. Inſomuch that we find a ſpeciall expreſſe law in the behalf of Birds in the time of their incubation, that while the Dam was ſitting upon her eggs or young ones, ſhe muſt not be taken, but let go free;* Deut. 22. 6. 7.  
*and this with a ſevere charge, and promiſe of much good upon the obſervation of it. And wherefore is ſuch mention made of the Oſtrich by the Lord himſelf, which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and takes no farther care of them,* Job. 39. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.  
*contrary to the nature of all other Birds, but expoſes them in the warme ſand to the benefit of the Sun to hatch them; I ſay, Why is this mentioned, but to intimate the power and care of God, who delivers their eggs and young ones from being cruſhed, and cauſes thoſe Birds ſtill to increaſe and multiply. Again, we find that God hath a care of the Beasts in this condition. Therefore he promiſed the Iſralites that among their cattel none ſhould be barren or caſt their young. And though (ſometimes) the voice of the Lord maketh the Hindes to calve; that is, Terrible claps of thunder cauſe ſome beaſts to caſt their young ſooner than ordinary; Yet his providence doth generally watch over every beaſt of* Exod 23. 26.



of the forest, to cause them to bring forth  
Job 39. 1, their fruit in season, and to cast out their sor-  
2. 3. rows; even the wild goats of the rock partake of  
this benefit from him. And men also are ge-  
nerally carefull of beasts in this condition, as  
Gen. 31. *Jacob* took speciall care of *Labans* cattle,  
8. & 33. that they did not cast their young; and in  
3. driving his own cattel, when he met his  
Brother *Esau*, he was mindfull to go such a  
pace, as might not hurt any creature with young.  
David, when a shepherd, exprestes that  
Calling by following the ewes great with young.  
Implied, that his care of them, was double  
to what he had of the rest of his flock.

1. 93. dol  
21. 2. 11.
2. 40. 11.

Hence it is, that when God would set forth  
to us the mild and gracious conduct of the  
Captain of our salvation Jesus Christ, 'tis thus  
expressed, *He shall feed his flock like a sheep-  
heard, he shall gather the Lambs with his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently  
lead those that are with young.* That is, shall  
use like tenderneſſe and indulgence to the  
weak and infirm, as all ſober men do to crea-  
tures that are with young. Now, Is a good  
man merciful to his beaſt, and is not our good  
God merciful to his children in that condi-  
tion? Doth God take care for ſouls, fiſhes,  
and beaſts, even every beaſt of the foreſt, and  
doth he *not much more take care of you, O ye of  
little faith?* Hath he not implanted in all men  
a moſt tender regard to teeming women?  
Whence came elſe that law of the *Arcopagites*,  
(whole



(whose famous laws were patterns to many nations) the like whereof, (or, at least, the like custome) we have in England, that, be a woman never so flagitious, and unworthy to live, yet if she be with child, that shall privilege her from the stroke of death, till she be delivered and gotten to some strength. I say, the Father of mercy doth infuse this compassion into the minds of all men, and not onely so, but hath given a most severe Law, for the sharp punishment of all men, that shall accidentally hurt a woman with child, that they shall give life for life, and limb for limb, or what ever punishment the husband shall think fit.

*apud Aelian. var. hist. lib. 5. p. (mihi) 404.*

*Exod. 21. 22, 23, 24.*

Now what greater evidence would you have, of the mercifull regard of our God and Saviour, than the particulars I have here proposed? So that it must needs be a thing unreasonable in you, and displeasing to him, not to trust in his name, and to cast all your cares, fears, and burthens upon him.

To all which, let me adde the consideration of his *alsufficiency* to help you in that condition; and this you will find, if well considered, to be the *surest support* you can fix your thoughts upon.

All creatures, by the instinct of nature, and providential gubernation, are apprehensive of approaching dangers, and use the best means they can to secure themselves. The subtile Foxes have holes, the foolish Deer their thickets,

kets, and the conies, though a simple folk, yet make they their holes in such rocks and precipices, from whence no hand can pluck them. The wary Bird, elpying the gun or snare of the Fowler, mounts aloft, and is safe from danger. Wherefore, when you grow bigger and bigger, and your heart grows big with fearful expectations of your approaching danger, should you not pray, that God would lead you to the rock that is higher then you; which Rock is Christ? Should you not look upwards, and ascend upwards daily in your thoughts, that so you may get above the hurt and peril of any affliction, yea, of death it self? Do you not observe, that among creatures, those are most active and powerfull, that are furthest elevated and removed from gross matter? You therefore extract, distill, &c. that you may have the quintessence and vertue of any herb more compendiously and effectually usefull in your time of need. You see also, the water is more active then the dull earth, the aire then the water, the fire then either of the three; and Angels excel (men, and all elements, and all creatures) in strength; and God doth yet further exceed them then they do a worm. Therefore to whom should you go, but to him, who onely hath the power of life and death?

It is both commendable and common in repenting sinners, to count themselves with the Apostle, chief sinners (because of some peculiar circum-

circumstances they elpy in their own sins; which they have cause to think are not common to be found in the sins of others.) But it is *more common then commendable* in afflicted persons, to aggravate their sorrows, like those in the Prophet, *Behold and see! Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow? &c.* So perhaps you think there is none so like to miscarry and perish, none ever more unlikely to live then you. This is, doubtless, your folly. For what improbabilities or seeming impossibilities can you labour under, which many others have not been exercised with and delivered from? *There is no new thing under the Sun.* Unlesse you are resolved to believe nothing but your own unbelieving heart; you may hear and know of many, that have been, as weak, sickly, bruised, hurt, diseased, and sufficiently afraid, yet have been safely delivered. But, be it so, that your case is singular and worse then ordinary; yet, cannot you say with the Apostle; *I know, whom I have trusted that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him?* Believers trust not in an arme of flesh (that is cursed;) nor do their hearts depart from the Living God; but they trust in him, whose Name is a sure Refuge, whose Promise is a sufficient Security, whose compassion is a sufficient Motive to do good, and whose Power is al sufficient to accomplish it.

Therefore 'tis remarkable that in the Old Testa-

Jer. 17. 5.

Testament God did often exercise his hand-  
maids with many improbabilities, before they  
had any children. As you may see in the  
Stories of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah,  
Hannah, Elizabeth, and others. Now, they  
considered not their own bodies though dead, that  
is, past the usual time of nature for child-bear-  
ing; but, trusting in him who was able to  
create that which was not, or to quicken that  
which was dead, they continued in the Faith,  
and were the joyful mother of children: *We*  
had, saith the Apostle, the sentence of death in  
our selves, that we might learn, not to trust in  
our selves, but in God, which raiseth the dead.  
As if he had said, the God whom we trust, is  
able to raise us, and will raise us hereafter out  
of our graves; how much easier is it to him  
to raise us out of our present danger and affli-  
ction.

1 Cor. i. 9.

Wherefore God himselfe is pleased, (to  
satisfie us once for all) to tell us, that women  
with child cannot be so hard put to it, but he  
can deliver them. For when he would ex-  
presse his allsufficient Power, in giving the  
Israelites such a deliverance, as they scarce  
could believe or expect, thus he doth express  
it; *I will gather them from the coasts of the*  
*earth, and with them the blind and the lame,*  
*the woman with child, and her that travelleth*  
*with child together.* That is, though in your  
return from captivity so long a journey to Jeru-  
salem; you may think of many impossibilities,

Jer. 31. 8.

as, *We being poor and helpleffe, how is it possible but that reeming and labouring women, must miscarry and perish by the way? Oh, saith God, I can strengthen them, give them a speedy & easy delivery, and make them even in that condition ( without long stay and losse of time ) able to go forward, till they come into their own Land.*

So then, I say; If your apprehensions of danger in your travell, do any way discourage your faith, yet let Gods *alsufficiency* put life into it. If to be delivered *be marvellous in your eyes*, yet it is not *marvellous in mine eyes*, saith the Lord of hosts.

Zechariah  
8. 6.  
Job. 5. 9.  
Rev. 15. 3.

But though we all acknowledge this in the notion, yet how few are there whose hearts are possessed with the power of this truth. As it is one thing to hear a thing in the notion, as for a man to think what he would do, if he were a Pilot or a Captain; and another thing, to have it in the reall managing, as when he is brought to fight. So it is here: It is one thing to say, I believe God is Almighty, and another to thing rest upon it. For not only the *stubborn Israelites* did distrust God in the wilderness; and *weak women*, as *Martha and Mary*, questioned Christs power to raise *Lazarus*, because he had been four dayes dead: but no less a man then *Moses himself* questions how God could provide for six hundred thousand in the wilderness. Wherefore, strive with your unbelief, give to God the glory

D. Prestons  
of Gods  
attributes  
p. 196.

John 11.  
21.

Numb. 11.

glory of his Power, Wisdome, and Mercy; fix the apprehensions thereof deeply upon your heart, and pray to the Author and Finisher of Faith, to *help your unbelief*. Conclude with the wife of *Manoah*, after you have mourned and prayed, with any hope of acceptation, *Surely, if the Lord had meant to destroy us, he would not have accepted a sacrifice at our hands.* Labour for the faith of those men and women of old, of whom it is written, that *by faith out of weakness they were made strong, and women received their dead to life.*

Yet let not the thoughts of Gods allsufficiency pass without one improvement more, which I shall give you in the words of a singular Divine.

Mark 10.  
28, 29, 30.

‘If God be *Allsufficient*, then learn to be content with God alone; for all desirable comforts are in him, as the effects are in the cause: as when Christ promises, that *If any leave house, or Brethren, or Sisters, &c. for his sake and the Gospel, they shall receive an hundred fold now in this life, Houses, Brethren, and Sisters &c.* They shall receive the very same things, that is, they shall find the comfort of all these things in God. Therefore consider, *what heaven is.* Do you think, that there you shall have a worse condition than here; you have a variegated appetite full of multiplicity, you want many comforts and conveniences; but when you come to

Hea-



'Heaven, you do not lay aside your nature,  
'but desire still. And yet there you shall  
'have none but *God* alone, so that if all this  
'vanity were not to be found in him, you  
'could not be happy, even in Heaven it self.  
'Therefore he saith, that he will be all in all.  
Wherefore comfort your selves with these  
words.

## C H A P. XIV.

*Patience in the midst of their pains, the duty of  
traveling women.*

**I** Know very well, that 'tis far more easie to  
prescribe patience to others, then to exer-  
cise it to our selves. And therefore, if I tell  
women in this condition, that it would be-  
come them to be *less clamorous and vociferous*  
*in their outcries and screeches*: they will soon  
reply, that *if we knew what they endured, we*  
*would not much blame them.* (a) I grant in-  
deed, that the pains of a woman in travel are  
alwayes expressed in Scripture, as the fittest  
comparison to set forth *the greatest pains*  
*imaginable*, as may be seen in the places quo-  
ted in the margin. And that the same word  
in the Original signifies both *pains in travel*  
*and pangs of death*, as critical Annotators do  
K observe

(a) Gen.  
3. 16  
Jer. 13. 21  
ch. 20. 23.  
ch. 30. 6.  
ch. 49. 24.  
ch. 50. 43.  
Isa. 21. 3.  
Hos. 13. 13  
Micah 4.  
9. 10 Isa.  
13. 8. John  
16. 21.  
1 Thes. 5. 3  
Psal. 48. 6.  
Rev. 12. 2.



observe on *Isa. 26. 17. Psal. 118. 4. Psal. 116. 3.* And that, in Scripture, the time of travell is commonly exprest by *crying out, Isa. 26. 17. chap. 42. 14.* And therefore I would not have any pious women to misinterrupt me, as if I counted it no less then sinful, to utter their complaints and outcries in the midst of their torments; but I would think it *commendable* in any of them, if they would so arm themselves with patience before-hand, that they might abate somewhat of those dreadfull groans and cryes, which do so much discourage their friends and relations, that are near them, and do much amaze the hearts, and weaken the hands, of those standers by, that they become the less helpful to them. But this is a small matter to what I intend. Give your self what liberty and ease you will, by pouring out your groans, so you look to *the chief thing*, that is, that your heart be all the while in a believing, praying, humble, patient, submissive frame.

To help your patience herein, you must know, that my meaning is not, that you should read, meditate, or perform any laborious duty at that time, but what I now mention as useful to you in that case, you must consider of before that hour, and so possess your mind with the grounds and principles of patience, that patience may then have in you its perfect work.

To which end, consider, that Sin is the procuring

curing cause of all sufferings; & therefore, if we understood, felt, considered the weight, desert, filth, and future evil of sin, how could we have the face to complain of any evil but that, or to make any other outcry, but that of the Apostle, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?* How emphatical are those words of the Prophet, *Why should a living man complain, a man, for the punishment of his iniquities?* That is, seeing you are but a creature, a sinful creature, and yet a living creature, punished, not destroyed, punished for your iniquities, which deserve far worse; why should you complain, seeing 'tis the Lords mercy you are not consumed? Suppose a Ship, after a long voyage, being come into harbour, springs a leak; the Master is somewhat troubled at it, and is never quiet till it be stopped, so that it is an evil to him; yet he comforts himself in this, that it did not happen to him, when he was out at Sea; that had been a great deal worse, and might have proved the ruine of them all: So there is this comfort in all our sorrows, that they happen to us in this life; we feel they are upon us, but blessed be God they are upon us here in this world, so that by a sanctified use to be made of them, they shall not be upon us in the world to come.

Consider also, whose hand it is that inflicts these sorrowes upon you. Your pangs and

Sam. 3.  
18.

throws, as they were procured by sin, so they are disposed by the Lord. This made *Job* so patient; *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away.* This made *Eli* submissive, when *Samuel* told him of the ruine of his family, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* Yea, this made *David* so silent, *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou Lord didst it.* So do you reason with your selves, shall not I drink of the cup of trembling, seeing 'tis in the hand of the Lord my God, who wil give me onely so much as shall profit me, and not destroy me? Shall I not stand under that cross that he hath laid on my shoulders, and stoop to that yoke, that he imposes on my neck. Bears and Lions take blows from their keepers, and shall not I bear any thing from my keeper and preserver? Children take bitter physick from the Mother, and hard blows from a Father, and shall not I be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? I cannot, I must not contend with my Maker, I will therefore humbly bend to him, lest he break me, and I will not make my cross heavier by impatience, then he hath made it by his providence.

Look also to the examples of patience, which are such as will abundantly shame us, if we murmur and repine at the hand of the Lord upon us.

God himself is pressed with our sins, as a cart is pressed that's full of sheaves, yet is still patient

*gent and long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that we should die and perish in our sins, but turn and live.*

The Lord Jesus endured innumerable injuries, unspeakable agonies, and intollerable grievances at his death; yet as a sheep before the shearer, so opened he not his mouth, he did neither strive nor cry, neither was his voice heard in the streets. And, alas, what are yon pains in comparison of his? The holy Spirit, our sanctifier and comforter, is exceedingly vexed and grieved at our yielding to many sins and corruptions, yet forsakes us not utterly, but waits all the day long, knocking at the doores of our hearts, and patiently expecting our reformation.

The holy Church of God hath been, from the first planting thereof, continually tossed to and fro, with what tempests Satan could raise against them.

They have been continually assaulted with the wild beasts of the wilderness, stung with fiery serpents, exposed to wants, hardships, dangers, &c. They have had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in Sheep skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy, &c.

Heb. 11.  
36, 37, 38.

Ecclesiastical Histories and Martyrologies are pregnant, with most famous instances of

the patience of the Saints, under such torments, as ordinary men have not the hardiness to inflict, much less the patience to endure. But 'tis a tried rule then, which none more certain, that *God never calls his people to any suffering, but he will be with them, to enable them to bear it.* But least you should think, that the examples are all of the stronger sex, I shall mention only a few (whereas I could many more) of the singular examples of womens patience, in such paines, as do, I think, equall the paines in travel.

*Joseph. Ecl.  
Hist. lib. 5.  
cap. 1.*

*Blandina* a christian woman, being brought before the Heathen Judges, for the Faith of Christ, when as all her friends quaked for fear, least, at the time of her answer (by reason of the frailty of the Flesh) she should not be constant; she was so replenished with grace from above, that the Executioners which tormented her by turns from morning to night, fainted for wearinesse, and ceased; confessing themselves overcome, and that they were no longer able to plague her with any more punishments, wondring that she yet drew breath having her whole body rent in pieces, and the wounds open: they confessing withal that one of these torments was sufficient to cost her her life, much more so many & so great. But this blessed Woman (like a noble wrestler) was renewed at her confession; for as often as she said, *I AM A CHRISTIAN*, she was refreshed, and felt

felt no pain of her punishment.

*Potamena*, a chaste and most beautiful Virgin having suffered infinitely, for the Faith of Christ; last of all, after great and grievous torments, terrible to be spoken of, together with her Mother *Marcella*, was burned with fire. Her body was first cruelly tormented with scourges, and afterwards boiling pitch poured upon her from the crown of her head to the sole of her feet.

*Euseb. l. 6  
c. 7.*

*Quinta*, for refusing their Idols, had her feet bound together, and by them trailed and dragged along the streets, which were paved with sharpe stones, and being beaten against Mill-stones, and sorely scourged, she was brought to the Place of Execution and there put to death.

*Cap. 40.*

*Mercuria*, an honest Matron, and *Donisia* a very fruitfull woman for child-bearing, (which Children notwithstanding she preferred not before the Lord) when they had comfounded the Judge, which used all kind of persuasions, after they were so tormented, that they were past all sence and feeling, they were beheaded with the sword. But *Ammonarion* a holy Virgin passed them all, notably enduring all kind of torment, saith the Author.

*Ibidem.*

*Theodosia*, a modest christian Maid of *Tyru* not fully eighteen years old, came to some christian prisoners, who were at their tryal, to comfort them, and was forthwith haled by the

*Euseb. lib.  
8. cap. 25.*

the



' the catchpoles before their judge, who pre-  
 ' sently scourged her bare sides, with bitter and  
 ' grievous lashes, renting with the whip, her  
 ' white breasts and tender dugs, to the bare bones.  
 ' At length this holy Virgin scarce breathing,  
 ' yet patient enough for all these punishments;  
 ' was throne in the Sea, and their drowned.

' *Ennathus* a christian Virgin, was cruelly  
 ' scourged and tormented, and patiently bearing  
 ' it, was burned quick.

Idem ib.  
 cap. 27.

I have set down these memorable instances  
 in the very words of the Historian, and I say  
 the pains there mentioned are such as do well  
 nigh equal the pangs of travel.

Object.

*But those blessed women suffered for God, and  
 therefore had both his assistance & acceptance. But  
 my pains are the meer fruit of sin, & of the curse.  
 And therefore what are these instances to the pur-  
 pose? What do they concerne women in travel?*

Ans.

All afflictions of whatever kind are the  
 fruit of sin. 'Tis sin, that caused the em-  
 nity in the seed of the Serpent against the  
 seed of the Woman. 'Tis by sin that we are  
 born to trouble, are of few dayes and full of  
 evil. 'Tis sin that fills the creature with  
 vanity, under which the whole Creation groans  
 and travells in pain together antill now. Sin  
 is the Mother and Nurse of our miseries. So  
 that if it be a sufficient reason for you to be  
 dejected and impatient under your pains,  
 because they are the fruit of sin, then there  
 is the like reason for every afflicted person to

com.



complain and desponde and *refuse to be comforted*, even Martyrs themselves; for no crosse could befall us in life, nor any violent death have been inflicted upon us, if sin had not made so wide a gape, at which all calamities do enter upon us. Hence it is, that the Church did alway acknowledge Gods justice in all the evils that came upon them. And the Emperour *Mauricians*, when bloody Villianes came and kil'd his wife and children before his face, and then came to murther him also, uttered no other words but these; *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy judgements.*

But the main thing you speak of, wherein they had the advantage, is this, that *they suffered for God*, and so do not you. But let me tell you, that neither the punishment, be it never so bitter, nor the cause, be it never so good, do make a compleat Martyr without Patience. If this patience be wanting, that they be unquiet, murmuring and clamorous under the hand of God, I doubt they shall not be soon cannonized in Heaven, as here upon Earth. Their sufferings are not accepted if not patiently endured. They do not dy to the Lord, unlesse they lay down their lives, and offer themselves a willing sacrifice; dying out of love to God, not out of unwilling subjection to the violence of Man.

Want of Patience, shewes want both of Faith and Love. And if want these, we are  
but

but as *sounding brasse and rinckling Cymballs*. If there be any thing we keep from God and resign not up all readily and intirely to him, we give him nothing, but we love something more then him. But if we part with a little willingly, if we be chearfull givers of our money to the needy, and *honour the Lord with our substance*, this is thank worthy with God, because *'tis supposed that* the mortified mind is alike ready, when God requires it, to part with the whole for Christ.

The same principle (if a right principle act us ) that inclines us to give a penny, must prompt us also to yield up *all, even life it self*, when God requires it. And were there is this habitual forsaking of all in affection, out of acknowledgement of Gods right to all we have, this mental resolution is with God *interpretative* Martyrdom. So then observe, that in all our Actions or Sufferings for God we must not lay so much stresse on the thing it self, as the principle, and end aimed at by the doer or sufferer. *God alwayes accepts the will for the deed* ( when impossibilites are the only bars to our performance ) *but he never accepts the most costly actions or sufferings without a willing minde.*

The upshot of all is this, that if we are sick with any naturall or adventitious malady, pained with any hurtful, or accidental casualty, when we suffer any loss in our Estates, or torments in our flesh, if then our *patience have*  
its

*its perfect work*, if we submit to the will of God, and ly down under his hand, as *Isaac* under the hand of *Abraham*, *trusting in his name*, and saying, with *Job*, *though he kill me yet will I trust in him*, if we bear all cheerfully, out of obedience to him, who disposes and sanctifies all to his people, this is acceptable with God, *this is suffering for God, this is glorifying God in the fires; and the Spirit of God and of glory shall rest upon such*. Therefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and be not wearied nor faint in your minds, remembering that if you thus suffer in obedience to him, you suffer for him, and may lay hold therefore of Gods promises to the afflicted, which do equally concern you with any other sufferers.

Again, you have strange examples among the *Papists*, what the women of that sect will inflict on their own tender bodies, in their times of penance. Take but one instance, *Elizabeth, Dutches of Turaine*, was wont, at certain times, to provide most cruell *Spalathens*.  
 scourges, and taking three or four of her *lib. 3. c. 10.*  
 maids with her, shut her self into her closet, 129.  
 and gave to each of them a scourge in their hands, and stripping her selfe naked commanded them to lay her on with lusty stripes; and this she endured with such willing patience, that she would never groan or cry under their lashes. Now if those delicate Ladies can so patiently bear any (the most unmercifull) chastise-

chastisements they lay upon themselves, how much more should you bear the chastisement of your heavenly Father, who is not insensible of the smart he puts you to, and will not be unmindfull *to give you an expected end.*

Consider further, how gracious our God is in his readinesse *to support* his people under all afflictions. 'I have read of one (a) *Theodorus*

Socr. Schol.  
lib. 3. c. 16.

'a Martyr put to extreme torments, by *Julian* the Apostate, and dismissed again by him, when they saw him so invincible. The hist-

(b) Ruffin.  
hist. Eccles.  
lib. 1. cap. 36

'orian sayes (b) he met with this Martyr a long time after and asked him, how he could bear such unsufferable pains, he answered, that *at first it was grievous*, but after a while there seemed to stand by him a young man in white, who with a soft handkercheif wiped off the sweat from his body, and bad him be of good cheer, insomuch that it was a punishment, rather than a pleasure, to be taken of from the rack, sith when the tormentors had done the Angel was gone. Thus when our friends can do little for us, God can send his *Angells*, who excell in strength, to suggest, comfort, and minister help to us. But however, he himself will alwayes be with us, *to make our beds in our sicknesse, to support our tyred bodies with his everlasting Arms*, and to uphold our souls with his free Spirit. Thus our Saviour promises, to all his people in whatever condition they be, *I will not leave you comfortlesse but I will come unto you.*

Yea God will be not only *nigh you*, but *careful for you* in the hour of your extremity to lay *no more upon you* than you shall be able to bear.

There was *an host of Angels*, near enough; though the Prophets man could not presently see them. There was a sacrifice at hand; though *Isaac*; at present, saw nothing but death before him. *Hagar*, when her bottle of water was spent, *sate down and wept*, (as if *Gen. 21: 19.* utterly undone) her provision & her patience, her bottle and her hope were both out together. Yet there was upon the very place sufficient supply, though she did not perceive it, till her eyes were opened; when therefore your bodily eyes shall look round about, and see your friends mourning and taking on, leaving you as hopelesse, and you cannot see any one among them of whom you can say, *that person is able to help me*, yet with the eye of your faith you may see *him who is invisible, standing at your right hand*, and ready and able to deliver you, when it comes even to *the most desperate extremity.* *Psal 90.30*

The Poets have feigned a story of *Pandora*, *Cal. Rhe dig. Var. l. 9.* that she had a box given her, fraught and stuffed with all the miseries that might be, *onely Hope was placed in the bottom*, *Epime- thus* rashly opening it, a swarme of miseries flew about his ears, which he perceiving, clapt the cover on the box again with all possible speed, and so with much adoe *saved hope sitting in the bottom.* Thus by the heedlesse

lesse folly of the first woman, a whole army of  
 miseries hath invaded the world, and many  
 sorrows have been inflicted upon travelling  
 women. But blessed be God, that hath yet  
 left us hope, that anchor of the soul, both sure and  
 stedfast. Let us therefore keep our hope, in  
 all extremities, yea against hope believe in hope  
 as Abraham did. And carry our selves under  
 our afflictions, as those that have hope towards  
 God. Rejoycing in hope, patient in tribulation,  
 continuing instant in prayer. For God doth  
 often delay his mercies, that he may exercise  
 these graces in us. As some report of the  
 Lyonesse that she leaves the young whelps so  
 long, till they have almost killed themselves;  
 with roaring and yelling, and then she comes  
 and relieves them, by which meanes they be-  
 come the more couragious, and the more pa-  
 tient of hunger. Thus God leaves Sarah to  
 be childless; Hannah to mourn in bitterness of  
 Soul for want of children. Elizabeth to be call-  
 ed barren, Rachel to kill her self almost with  
 fretting for want of children. He leaves Jonah  
 three dayes and three nights in the belly of  
 Hell, makes \*Job childlesse, leaves him com-  
 fortlesse and helplese, as to any longer life;  
 leaves Heman free among the dead, and \*David  
 groaning and roaring under intollerable evil.  
 Yea the tribes of Jacob to be as so many dry  
 bones; Lazarus to be stincking in the grave;  
 \*Dorcas to be dead and lamented; and all hope,  
 that they should be saved, was gone, from those  
 that

Psal. 33.

18. 147. 11.

Heb. 6. 13.

Rom. 4. 18

Rom. 12.

12.

\*Job. 6. 11:

\*Psal. 38. 2

3. ch.

\*Act. 17. 20



that were in the ship with the Apostles,\* I say, thus God leaves his people under pressing calamities and appearances of nothing, but destruction, that he may the more glorifie himself, and comfort them, in their deliverance and salvation at last. Therefore seeing *the times and seasons are in his hands, and he hath made every thing beautifull in its season,* what is more becoming us then to wait his time, as *the husband-man patiently expects the time of harvest, the marriner waits for wind and tide, and the watch-man waits for the approach of the day.* And though it may come to a criticall extremity, yet *in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*

But to draw to a conclusion. *Above all things labour before this hour come to lay hold on Christ, by faith,* and then you will have the like comfort with that good woman in the *Marian* persecution, who being brought before *Bonner* and tried concerning her faith, he threatned, that he would take away her husband, *saith she, then Christ will be my husband; I will take away thy Child; she answered Christ is better to me than ten Sons; I will strip thee of all thy outward comforts; Yea but Christ is mine, said she, and you cannot strip me of him.* So let this settle and stablish your mind, if Christ be yours *all is yours, as far as shall be for your good.* Though your travel

*quicquid profectum est ex ore Dei, &c. Calvin. in Jerem. 31. 8; 1. 248.*

may

\* *Hinc colligimus prapostere facere eos, qui aestimant dei gentiam ex presenti statu. Atqui hoc vitii ferè ingentium est nobis a natura, & occupat sensus omnis nostros: hinc tanta difficultas, & hinc fit, ut omnes dei provisiones apud nos frigeant. — Nam cum Deus aliquid promittit, cernimus quomodo fieri possit, & si mentes nostrae comprehendunt modum, & curramus repudiamus*



may perhaps take away all strength from you, yet it cannot take away Christ, though it may cost perhaps the life of the child to save your life, yea though it should cost your life also, Yet still Christ is yours, and therefore death is yours. So that if God see it good for you, for your family and relation, that you should live longer, he can command deliverance for you; it otherwise, yet good is the word of the Lord. Wherefore keep fast hold of Christ, by faith; and then though you passe through the valley of the shadow of death you need fear no evil, for when your voice failes you, the Lord will hear those groans that cannot be uttered; when your eyes faile you the Lord will be a light unto you; when your flesh and your heart faileth, God shall be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever.

To him I leave you. He supply in you by his own grace whatever is defective in these directions and helps I have given.

**Luk. 1. 43.** And blessed is she that believeth, for there shall be a performance of those things that were told her from the Lord.

Lo this, wee have searched it, so it is, heare it, and know thou it for thy good. Job. 5. 27.

**If any Reader find any good by it,  
Give glory to God**

**FINIS.**